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DETECTIVE STORIES

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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FEATURE STORY

NUMBER NINE QUEER STREET

by JACK BECHDOLT

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Coming Good Things

WELL, friends, here we are again with promises of all sorts of fine reading matter to appear in the next issue of this magazine. We have prepared an unusually good treat as you will see when you get No. 119, out October 15th. Of course the feature story is the main attraction. It is one of Jack Gottlieb's best efforts at detective fiction and he surely wrote a winner when he produced the novelette "Trailed by a Private Detective." You know those stories that grip your interest in the very first paragraph and hold your attention all through the exciting episodes to the last word in the final chapter? Well, this is one of those stories and you really cannot help enjoying it.

The serial is ending in this number, so we are going to start a new two-part story by Peter Perry. It's a detective story too and is called "The Ring That Chattered." You must not fail to read the opening chapters. It is filled with mysteries of the most perplexing kind and the explanation at the end will bring a contented feeling to your mind as it is a story that satisfies.

Hamilton Craigie has contributed a remarkable detective sketch written in his usual forceful style. Entitled "The Wind Burner," it develops a mystery which is not exposed until you read the last sentence. Only a skillful author can maintain the secret of his yarn up to the very end—but, as you all know, Mr. Craigie is a very skillful writer.

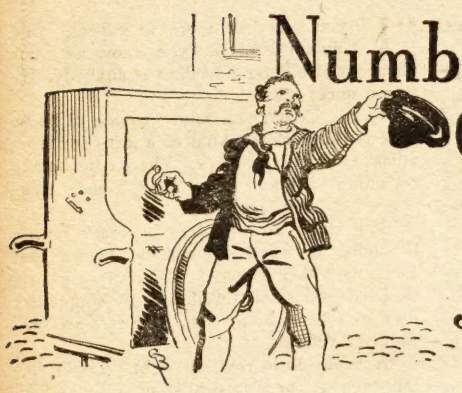
Next, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to publish a splendid mystery story called "The Third Course," by Frederic W. Johnston, and a yarn entitled "Shuffled Identities," by Edward Sparks Brown. There is a detective in the latter story, but really the best detective work is done by a pretty sharp broker, who wasn't deceived by appearances. A couple of detectives figure in Merritt L. Allen's story "The Trail of a Thief," one a man of brains and the other depending upon his brawn while running down the law breakers.

Many of our readers like the short articles we publish, so there will be quite a number of very good ones in the forthcoming issue. As we generally print more than we announce on this page our readers are bound to get an abundance of splendid material for their money. Do not fail to order a copy of No. 119 ahead, so you will be sure to get it.

THE EDITOR.

SPECIAL NOTICE

We are going to predate No. 120, out November 1st. It will be dated November 15th, but it will be out the same date November 1st issue would appear. Do not let this change confuse you. We will remind our readers of it again in our next issue.



Number Nine Queer Street

by

Jack Bechdolt

CHAPTER ONE

FORD MARKMAN'S RIVAL

PROFESSOR FORD MARKMAN had difficulty concealing his surprise at the identity of the early morning caller his servant ushered into his bachelor apartment.

Looking up from his morning grape-fruit, Markman stopped with spoon halfway to his lips, and his small eyes, usually twinkling in friendly greeting to every man, widened and stared.

But in a moment Professor Markman remembered his duties as a host. He rose hurriedly.

"Well, Captain French! Glad to see you. You'll sit down and have a cup of coffee?"

Detective Captain Oscar French of the metropolitan force bowed rather stiffly. His large, smooth face looked a little red with embarrassment. He was a big man, a handsome man and not unaware that the ladies often followed his progress down the street with side-long glances of admiration.

French professed no admiration for Ford Markman.

On several occasions he had made no bones about speaking his mind.

"That damned amateur!" was one of the terms he had applied to the professor of mathematics who sometimes aided the metropolitan force in unraveling puzzling crime mysteries.

"The commissioner must be crazy, letting a schoolteacher mess up police cases! The police don't need any outsiders to tell them how to handle their own business!" French had said these things also.

On several occasions when Professor Markman and French had met the detective captain plainly showed his opinion of the outsider. Once he had sneered at Markman; it was the occasion when Ford Markman captured the thief of the ruby of Marduk-Nasir from the Manhattan Museum. "It certainly does beat the music the luck some of you beginners have!"

Remembering these occasions and French's attitude, Professor Markman had reason to feel surprised at his visit.

Markman laid no claims to being a detective.

On several occasions when he had won sensational success he insisted on giving the police more than their share of credit.

He was not officially attached to the metropolitan force.

But sometimes, at the request of his friend the commissioner, or other influential friends,

he loaned his services and found his reward in the intellectual pleasure of solving riddles.

Captain French took the offered chair uneasily. He turned redder than ever.

"I just wanted a word, Professor Markman. About that murder in Queer street."

"Oh, yes. You mean the Wilkes case. The odd old chap who lived in Queen Court."

"I call it Queer street. That's a kind of nickname for it."

"From what I read in the morning paper, a very appropriate nickname." Markman smiled. "A queer street, a queer man and a queer case."

For some reason French took offense.

"Oh, not so queer!" he said loftily. "I've got it all doped out now."

"Yes, I notice the paper says you had a theory that would lead to an arrest this morning!"

"Yes, I have. Before night this town is going to get a big surprise."

"I congratulate you, captain. But, after all, I don't suppose you came here to waste time hearing my congratulations."

"No, sir, I didn't."

"Well, if there's anything I can do in connection with our queer friend in the queer house on the queer street, it must be something mighty queer indeed! Because I don't know anything about him except what I read just now."

"Oh, it's just a minor point. Just a detail!" French declared. "If you could tell me it'd save me a few steps, that's all. Not that I need your help."

"No! Of course not that!"

"No." French agreed with an impressive shake of the head. If there was any sarcasm in Markman's tone it passed over him at the present.

"Just let me outline this thing, will you, professor?"

"Delighted!" Markman declared.

While Markman went on with his breakfast (a broad-shouldered, rather portly, middle-aged man with gray hair, dressed in loose, comfortable gray clothing, wearing an old-fashioned black string tie), Captain French gave his version of the atrocious murder in Queen Court, popularly nicknamed Queer street.

CHAPTER TWO

THE QUEER LITTLE MAN

"IF you read the morning papers," said Captain French, "you know as much about the late Peter J. Wilkes as anybody. He was a queer bird.

"Queen Court, you know, is one of those little old-time closes, kind of a left-over from village days in New York. There's six houses on either side and three more houses shutting off the blind end of it.

"The whole row used to be coach houses belonging to swell millionaires' homes that faced on other streets. Then they got remodeled into small dwellings. A couple are used as studios by artists. The rest are one-family dwellings.

"A funny little row, all right. Looks like the stage set for a musical show, with its flagstone court and the old horse trough in the middle turned into a fountain, and the little old brick houses with green and blue doors and all that.

"Number Nine was the home of Peter J. Wilkes. Wilkes had lived there for some years.

"Quiet little fellow this Wilkes. A bachelor. Lived alone except for the cook, who came by the day, and an old negro servant that slept in the house. Neither of them is suspected."

"So I see by the paper," Markman nodded.

"Wilkes's body was found last night at a quarter after eight, just about like the paper says. The negro servant found him. He was sitting in a chair in the little reception room off the hall. He had been killed by two stabs from a dagger.

"The servant had been sent out on an errand a couple of hours before and came home at a quarter past eight. There wasn't any sign of struggle or any clue that we could find, with one exception, and the papers don't know anything about that yet."

"A real clue, then!" Markman exclaimed.

"You said it!" French declared with much satisfaction. "The clue that settles the case in my mind. Well, about that later.

"Now one of the first things I always do on a case like this, professor, is look up all the

dope on the deceased person. I believe in being thorough, not theoretical."

"A very good idea, I'm sure," Markman agreed amiably. He knew French openly scorned him as a theorist.

"Well, so I looked up everything about this man Wilkes. Know what he's famous for? His collection of fine paintings, rare, expensive old paintings by old European masters."

"I think I also read this morning that another eccentricity of Wilkes was his odd love of music," Markman interrupted. "Wasn't there something about his neighbors taking him into court a year or so ago because he used to throw silver to every street piano-grinder who came along, and they claimed that Queen Court was filled with grind-organs from morning until night?"

"Oh, that stuff!" French retorted. "Sure. The man was a nut, but harmless, you understand. That music stuff isn't any clue now. The row died out more than a year ago. Besides, his neighbors aren't the kind to murder a man because of a little quarrel about grind-organs."

"God forbid! I never suspected them."

"Well, then to get back to business, professor. This Wilkes collected rare masterpieces of painting. Among others he claimed to own the original of a picture called 'The Red Cavalier' by Franz Hals, a famous Dutch artist that's been dead for centuries.

"About two months back Campbell Haines, the railroad millionaire, bought a picture in Europe he claims is the original 'Red Cavalier' by this same Hals. And Wilkes told the newspapers Haines had been stung, because he owned the real picture. Then——"

"Yes, yes, I remember!" Markman exclaimed.

"After Wilkes made his statement," he went on, "Haines appealed for confirmation to the dealer who sold him the 'Red Cavalier,' a famous London dealer, Sir Marmakuke Crouch. And Crouch guaranteed that Haines had the real picture and Wilkes had been swindled into buying a copy. Crouch offered to come to America to prove his contention, and has already sailed for New York."

"That's it," French agreed. "That's the idea exactly! Now, Professor Markman, what would you say if you heard that the Wilkes edition of this same picture, the 'Red Cavalier,' had been stolen out of Peter Wilkes's house last night at approximately the time Wilkes was murdered. What'd you say to that?"

Markman sat up straight and blinked his little eyes.

"I'd say that was mighty interesting!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir! And furthermore, suppose you knew that a certain young man with a lot of money has been trying for some months to buy this same 'Red Cavalier' from Peter Wilkes. Wilkes wouldn't sell. The young man insisted. This London dealer, Crouch, said that Wilkes's picture was a fake. The young man insisted he wanted it anyhow. No, Wilkes said. Then that same young man is known to have visited Peter Wilkes last night between the time the negro servant left the house and the time he returned.

"And when the servant came back Wilkes was dead and the picture stolen!

"How about that, eh, Markman?"

"I'd say it ought to be looked into," Markman agreed.

"And it has been looked into, Markman! You bet it has! I've looked into it, and I've got all my facts straight."

"I'm very glad to hear that, captain. Then just what can I do?"

"This!" Captain French grinned triumphantly. "You can help me arrest this young man. Help me by telling me about his habits and hangouts."

"I!"

"Yes, you, professor. Because this young man is a very good friend of yours. And that's what I want of you—advice on how to nab this friend of yours."

Captain of Detectives French revealed his little surprise with an air that plainly gloated at Markman's discomfiture.

An observing person would have noted that French, for all his physical size and loud voice, had something small and twisted in his mental and spiritual makeup. An observing person might have guessed that French was bitterly jealous of Ford Markman and very much delighted to be the author of tidings so distressing and a request so thoroughly unpleasant.

Before Ford Markman could reply to French his servant came into the room and announced:

"Mr. Lawrence Rook would like to see you, professor. He says his business is very urgent."

"Rook! Lawrence Rook!"

Detective French was on his feet with a bound.

He turned on the servant sternly.

"Send Rook here at once!" he ordered roughly.

Before Markman could protest at such unusual procedure, French smote his knees with his open palms and laughed aloud.

"Trapped!" he exclaimed gloatingly. "Walked right into my arms. Lawrence Rook—the very man I came to arrest!"

CHAPTER THREE

MR. LAWRENCE ROOK

THE man who followed the servant into Markman's apartment was not yet forty, handsome, rather military in bearing, dressed in good clothing, but with signs of carelessness of detail that suggested he had risen hastily that morning, or perhaps had not been to bed at all the night before.

Lawrence Rook did not see Captain French at first. He went directly toward Markman, hand outstretched, exclaiming: "Markman, I've come to you for help! I'm in the devil's own mess about this Wilkes murder and only you can save me!"

Detective Captain French had no intention of being ignored.

"Hold on, young man!" French exclaimed. "You're under arrest."

The captain's hand fell heavily on Rook's shoulder.

Rook, thus halted, turned in amazement.

"Good Lord! What in the world is this?" he began.

French warned him quickly.

"Whatever you say may be used against you!"

Ford Markman sprang from his chair.

"Really, French," he protested, "you needn't keep hold of Mr. Rook. I'll be responsible for his not jumping out of a window or knocking you down with a blackjack. Mr. Rook is a responsible gentleman."

"Well, he's arrested. I don't believe in kid-glove methods!" French growled, but he dropped his hand from Rook's shoulder.

"This, Lawrence, is Detective Captain Oscar French," Markman said by way of introduction.

"But what—why——" Rook stammered.

"You're under arrest for suspicion of knowing a whole lot about the murder of Peter J. Wilkes, if that's what you're about to ask," French growled.

Lawrence Rook paled.

He turned on Markman excitedly.

"Markman, that's the very thing I came to talk to you about. I was going to beg your help in this case. I'm in danger, Markman, in grave danger, through no fault of mine. Only a man with your trained brain can help me out."

"Really, Lawrence," Professor Markman advised hastily, "I think you had better see your lawyer. You want a lawyer, not a detective."

"But I don't want a lawyer! And I don't want any ordinary detective. I need you, Markman! Certain circumstantial evidence makes it appear that I—well, that I might even have killed Peter Wilkes with my own hand. Why, they could hang me on the facts as they stand!"

"Rook," French said again, "I warn you not to talk about your case. What you say——"

"Can be used against me. Yes, I know! But I've got to talk! I've got to have the help of a man of Markman's genius for solving crimes. If you'll let me have half an hour alone with him——"

French, to whose ears the visitor's praise of Markman was decidedly distasteful, was about to refuse sternly, but Markman forestalled him.

"Lawrence," he said seriously, "let me ask you two questions. You are absolutely innocent of all complicity in the murder of Peter J. Wilkes?"

"I am!"

"And still insist that you wish my help, and not a lawyer?"

"Yes, yes! You must help me out."

"Then I suggest," said Markman, "if Captain French is agreeable, that you sit down and tell us exactly what you did, and all that you saw and heard in the house at Number Nine Queen Court last night."

"Now, look here, professor!" French exclaimed. "This isn't the proper place for examination of a prisoner. I'm a busy man, and this is a mighty important case! I can't see that you have any license to sit in on this affair."

Ford Markman remained suave, but a note of sternness, of threat, crept into his manner.

"If you insist, Captain French, take your prisoner to jail, under arrest, mind you. I shall consider it my duty then to secure proper authorization from the commissioner to take charge of this investigation. If I do that, captain, you will probably be working under my direction. Perhaps that would be more regular, and, I dare say, more satisfactory to everybody."

But that was not satisfactory to French. Markman knew it would not be. French was working for glory, and he didn't like the idea of any man other than French getting credit in solving the sensational Wilkes murder mystery.

He also knew that if Markman went to the commissioner things would happen exactly as Markman said.

"Oh, all right. Anything to be reasonable!" he said, yielding with bad grace.

Markman smiled.

"Well, let's all sit down and be as comfortable as possible," he said. "These are good cigars, gentlemen; I find them very helpful to logical thinking. Now, if you have everything you want, suppose Mr. Rook tells us the whole truth about his connection with Peter J. Wilkes, omitting nothing, it being understood that he is under arrest and Captain French has the legal privilege of using this information against him if it seems necessary. You agree, Lawrence?"

Rook swallowed nervously and nodded.

"I trust your judgment absolutely, Markman."

"Then shoot!" French grunted.

"I'll tell everything!" Rook exclaimed, "every detail. But it's a mighty queer yarn!"

Markman chuckled.

"I'm not surprised to hear it! Everything about Number Nine Queer street seems to be in keeping."

CHAPTER FOUR

MORE QUEERNESS

"TO get it all straight, I must begin in Paris, ten years ago," said Lawrence Rook.

"Ten years ago!" French growled. "Oh, say——"

"Captain French!" Markman warned sternly, "if you insist on trying to dictate this man's statement——"

French subsided with an inarticulate grumble.

"I had been living in Paris," Rook went on. "My parents left me a little money, which I spent in the study of painting. I had hopes of becoming a really great painter.

"My hopes were idle! Vain!

"That day, ten years back, is the bitterest in my memory!

"That day I knew, beyond doubt, I was a failure.

"I was not a bad painter. Not bad, but not good enough! I lacked something—the spark of genius they call it for lack of a better word."

"Now, listen here!" French broke in again. "Is this a moving picture, or some kind of dramatic monologue, or what? I'm a busy man."

"French, for the last time I warn you!" Markman cried, thoroughly roused. "I shall telephone the commissioner!"

The usually mild professor reached for the telephone instrument.

"All I ask is that he get to facts," French protested, very much grieved. "Let him go on. I'm listening."

Lawrence Rook went on at Markman's nod.

"I was a failure, and realized it. I realized I had wasted my youth and money trying to make a genius out of ordinary clay. And I was without a ten-franc note to bless me Actually facing eviction and starvation.

"In my studio stood a big canvas, my last effort to win recognition.

"The picture had just come back from the salon, refused by the jury.

"I had hoped to win the grand medal, fame, a fortune by that final effort. They would not even hang it on the wall!

"And I had no idea where my next meal was coming from, or what to do unless it was to throw myself into the Seine.

"On that afternoon, in the midst of my desperation, a man came into my studio, an American I knew slightly. His name—the name I knew him by—was Carrigan, but he had many aliases. The man was a notorious swindler, but rather a likable fellow at that.

"Carrigan knew my circumstances exactly. He had but to look at my face and at the canvas leaning against the wall to read the last chapter of my failure.

"He took advantage of that moment to get me to help him in a carefully planned swindle.

"Carrigan knew of a rich American, a man without any particular knowledge of pictures, but newly rich and anxious to be thought a great collector and critic. Carrigan had told this rich fool that he could get possession of Franz Hals's painting, 'The Red Cavalier,' and offered it to him for two hundred thousand dollars. He came to me to get me to make a copy of the original picture, a copy he would sell to the American as the original."

French was much too interested now to assert his own importance.

Ford Markman had sunk his chin in his hand and seemed to doze, but his bright little eyes were very much alive with activity reflected from his busy brain.

"You made that copy of the 'Red Cavalier' which Peter J. Wilkes bought and insisted was the original," Markman guessed.

"I did," said Rook. "The original was in a public museum at that time, accessible to anybody, but Wilkes was too ignorant to know that. I made the copy, and I made it upon the same canvas I had sent a few days before to the salon, the canvas bearing my own painting. I painted the copy of the Hals directly over my work. At the time, in my youthful cynicism, it seemed to me a most fitting use for my rejected work.

"The act was criminal, I don't deny it.

"I knew the copy was to be sold to an ignorant man as the original. I even prepared it carefully with an antique varnish to counterfeit the original in every way.

"I don't try to excuse myself for the crime.

"For my work I received $500 from Carrigan. A week later my uncle died unexpectedly and left me millions.

"Millions! But they came too late to save me from dishonesty."

"Well, what did you do then?" Captain French prompted.

"I tried to forget the whole business," Rook said.

"I did not then know the name of the victim of this picture swindle. I only knew he was a rich American. I had no way of finding Carrigan, the swindler, or learning the victim's identity. I tried to forget it all.

"I came to America, took up a new life and devoted myself to managing the property my uncle left me.

"A few months ago I was reminded of 'The Red Cavalier' when Peter Wilkes, through the newspapers, announced that he owned the original and that the picture sold to Campbell Haines was a fraud.

"A guilty instinct led me to visit Wilkes's home at once, and there I recognized the fraudulent picture I had painted with my own brush in Paris. I tried to make reparation by offering Wilkes twice what he had paid for the canvas to get it back.

"Wilkes refused to sell. At that time I had not hinted what I knew of the picture. He refused all offers by me or my agents. He was tremendously excited by the controversy he had stirred up.

"When I learned early this month that Sir Marmaduke Crouch, the famous dealer, was coming to America to prove the Wilkes picture a fraud I was terror-stricken.

"I knew that under that copy of the Hals painting was my own picture, the one submitted to the Paris salon, bearing my own signature.

"I knew that before the controversy was settled Crouch would be obliged to expose the entire fraud, even remove a portion of the paint from the copy to prove his contention, for the man's professional reputation was at stake.

"I saw my own disgrace, my name revealed as the author of the swindle.

"I have tried in every way to atone for what I did. I have kept the family name respected. Yesterday, when I learned that Crouch had actually sailed for New York, I went to Peter Wilkes to make a final appeal."

"Now we're getting down to brass tacks!" French exclaimed. "You take long enough about it!"

"I mean to be perfectly honest and thorough," Rook replied.

"And he's absolutely right in that," Markman added.

"All right. I'm not kicking. Come on, Rook; get to the murder."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE "RED CAVALIER"

ROOK sighed as he began again.

"Last night I did what others may say I should have done at once. I went to see Peter Wilkes and told him the exact truth about the fraudulant 'Red Cavalier,' just as I have told it to you gentlemen.

"I made the appointment by telephone during the afternoon."

French nodded profoundly. "Yes, the police know all about that, all right."

"I called at Number Nine Queen Court at about a quarter after seven in the evening. Mr. Wilkes admitted me to the house. He said his colored man was out on an errand. I understood him to mean we were alone.

"We went to the picture gallery, which takes up the rear of the house, the room opening on the little back yard.

"I told Mr. Wilkes the entire story, and repeated that I was ready to take the picture off his hands at double what it cost him, or even more, whatever sum he considered sufficient reparation for the mischief I had caused.

"Gentlemen! Mr. Wilkes did not believe me!"

Ford Markman nodded shrewdly.

"He suspected some sort of trickery?" Markman suggested.

"Exactly. Mr. Wilkes thought I was lying to him because I wanted to get possession of the painting. He even accused me of being an agent for Campbell Haines!"

"Aha!" Markman chuckled. "I suppose he thought Haines wanted to quiet the controversy about the painting by buying him out? Thought Haines was afraid of the expert's verdict?"

"He did. He said as much. I never in my life saw a man so stubbornly wrong, so suspicious, so unmovable in every way as this Peter Wilkes.

"The man evidently believed that fraudulent Hals was a treasure beyond price and gloried in all the row he had kicked up. And he refused to sell or give away his picture or to destroy it. Money nor pleading would not move him."

"Then what did you do?" French asked.

"I was at my wits' end," Rook said, "when a curious interruption came. The evening was warm and windows were open. I noticed that a street piano was playing somewhere about, in front of the house I suppose.

"It had played several popular airs when Wilkes stopped in the middle of his talk, and I saw that he was listening intently.

"The organ-grinder had changed to a new tune, one I did not recognize.

"Peter Wilkes looked startled. He sprang up from his chair. 'You must excuse me for a minute,' he said hurriedly, and went out of the room. He went through the door leading to the front of the house.

"I was left alone, in front of the picture that caused me so much unhappiness.

"I looked at it and knew that if I did not get possession of it that canvas would surely lead to my exposure as a party to a swindle—my disgrace—disgrace on the family name. I—I——"

Rook seemed at a loss. Ford Markman said for him: "Then, rather than be disgraced, when you found yourself alone and not likely to be disturbed, you cut the canvas from its frame with your pocket knife, rolled it up, hid it under your coat and got away from Wilkes's house?"

"That's exactly what I did! How could you guess——"

"It's exactly what you would do in the circumstances," Markman explained. "I under-

stand your character, understand how you would react under most conditions."

"Pooh!" French sneered. "Why don't you admit you made a good guess and let it go at that! Look here, Rook; how did you get out of the house?"

"Through a window, to the back yard."

"Where was Wilkes?"

"Somewhere in front of the house, I suppose. He went in that direction."

"Hear anything before you left?"

"I listened before I stole the picture, afraid he would come back. I heard the front door open shortly after he left the room; at least I think it was the front door. I thought I heard men talking in the house, one man rather, in very low tones. I judged that Wilkes had admitted a visitor."

"Who'd he be busy with?"

"I don't know. I didn't try to reason it out? But when he heard that music——"

"Grind-organ music?"

"Yes. When he heard it, it seemed to remind him of something. He left the room hurriedly."

French said with elaborate sarcasm: "Huh! I suppose he ran out to throw a nickel to the grind-organ man!"

Unexpectedly Markman exclaimed:

"French, I congratulate you on that! That's the best bit of reasoning I've seen you do!"

"Quit your kidding," French growled, reddening. "This is murder, a damn serious business, and no time to be funny. Well, Rook, just what did you do after you went through the window?"

"It was dusk. I heard a church clock toll eight. I climbed the fence separating the Wilkes house from the one facing on the next street. That house is an apartment building. I managed to slip through its basement and furnace room and by its area door into the next street. I found a taxi and was driven home.

"When I got home I destroyed that fraudulent picture at once, burned it in the furnace. I then sat down and wrote Peter Wilkes a check for twice what he paid for it and mailed it to him. That is everything I know."

"So that's all you know, is it?" French exclaimed roughly.

"Yes, it is. That's everything, exactly as it happened."

"And you expect us to believe it?"

"Why not?" Markman said. "I believe every word!"

"You would?" French said cuttingly. Then he added: "But I don't. If you ask me, I say that's a mighty fishy story made up to cover a lot of things this man knows and doesn't dare tell."

"Now see here, you——" Rook began angrily.

Markman quieted him.

When Rook had harkened to his wiser counsel the professor suggested amiably: "There's one bit that might corroborate Rook's story. I suggest we go back to Wilkes's house and see if that check he mailed to Wilkes last night hasn't arrived. You say you mailed it at once, Rook?"

"Took it to the corner postbox myself. That was before nine o'clock."

"Then it would be collected on the nine-thirty round and delivered this morning. You agree, Captain French?"

"If he mailed it the check ought to be there now," French grumbled.

"Then suppose we go see?"

"I've got a department car outside," French agreed. "But even if the check is there—well, he might have been smart enough to fix up that alibi last night."

"Anything is possible," Markman conceded absently. "By the way, Lawrence, you say that grind-organ played a new tune—a tune you hadn't heard, when Wilkes suddenly got interested in it?"

"Yes, a queer little air. I thought it sounded like something Spanish—a folk song, or a snatch from an opera, I should say. I keep pretty fair track of the popular music, and this was something I never heard before."

"Could you whistle the tune or hum it now?"

Rook shook his head.

"But I think I would recognize it if I heard it."

"Hey, what's all this rot?" French complained. "What the devil has a grind-organ got to do with it?"

"Well, it strikes me," Markman suggested, "that it's odd for a street grind-organ to play

anything new, that's all. I never heard one play any tune that hadn't been popular for at least a month, did you?"

"Shucks, I don't know! I've got something else to do besides listen to grind-organs."

"Yes," Markman murmured, "you would have."

He added: "That's one of the things that ails you, French."

But the professor was too wise an old diplomat to let French hear his remarks.

CHAPTER SIX

MARKMAN TAKES CHARGE

THE three men were driven in the police automobile to Number Nine Queen Court.

The address was much as French described it, an odd little stub end of a street, closed on three sides by old-fashioned red brick houses. The houses were trimmed with wooden blinds painted bright green or blue, and all the windows had flower boxes before them.

Number Nine boasted a handsome white front door with a curious brass knocker and a quaint bellpull, also of brass.

A patrolman, left to watch the place, admitted the party.

"I want to see all the mail that's been delivered," said French, "everything."

The patrolman saluted and brought a small wicker tray piled with letters.

French led the way into a small room off the front hall.

"This is where they found Wilkes," he said. "In that chair, the one you're about to sit down in, Rook."

Lawrence Rook, about to seat himself, changed his mind hastily.

"Try this chair," Markman suggested, offering another.

To Rook he whispered: "That's a cheap third-degree bluff! Don't mind what French does!"

"Now," said French, seated at a small table, "let's open the mail and see what we can see about this check business."

One by one he opened the letters delivered too late for the dead man to read. French read each with interest. Some were circulars advertising bargains, some were bills and some letters from various persons interested by the controversy about the famous painting, "The Red Cavalier."

French took his time to the task, seeming to delay on purpose.

But finally he reached the bottom of the pile and read the last letter.

There was, among them all, no letter enclosing a check from Lawrence Rook. There was no letter from Rook at all.

"It must have come!" Rook exclaimed. "Surely it must have been delivered! I mailed it before nine o'clock!"

French called for the patrolman.

"This all the mail?"

"Certainly, captain."

"Sure nothing was dropped in the letter slot and overlooked?"

"Not a chance. The postman rang the bell every time he came, because he knew Wilkes was dead and wanted to be careful. I took everything that came."

French turned on Rook. "There you are," he said, waving his hands.

"It might come by a later mail," Markman suggested.

"It might," French admitted, with peculiar emphasis on the verb.

The captain of detectives drummed his fingers on the table.

"Well, Professor Markman, anything more I can do for you? Like to look over the house maybe?"

Markman nodded and rose. The three made a brief survey of the premises, going to the picture gallery which occupied the rear of the small house. Rook pointed out the empty frame that had held the picture in dispute, and showed where he stood when Wilkes left him, how he listened at the door and heard voices in the front of the house and how he left by a rear window with the stolen canvas.

"Anything more I can do for you?" French asked with elaborate politeness.

"Yes," said Markman, "tell me what your next step is to be."

"My next step?" French smiled grimly. "Well, that's plain enough. Mr. Lawrence

Rook, I arrest you. I'll prefer a charge before evening to-day."

"Before you do that will you listen to a piece of advice?" Markman asked.

"Well, I don't mind listening."

"It's this: Don't arrest Rook yet."

"And why not?"

"Because Lawrence Rook, to my personal knowledge, is not the sort of man you need worry about finding. In fact, I will agree to be personally responsible for his appearance at any time."

"Now, Professor Markman, really, that's a bit strong."

"You're not satisfied with my guarantee?"

"I am not. It's not regular."

"But, French, there is something that should be done at once that is much more important than arresting Rook, who may turn out to be a perfectly innocent person with a just claim against you for false arrest. Something that must be done immediately——"

"Oh, indeed!" French sneered. "And what might that be?"

"We must find the man with the grind-organ."

"What!"

Markman repeated: "We must find the man with the grind-organ, the man who played outside this house last night at about half-past seven. And we must not let the man know we are looking for him."

"Find the grind-organ man?"

"Yes, but cautiously, not letting him suspect we connect him with this affair."

French gasped.

He waved his arms derisively.

"Find a grind-organ man, name and address unknown; find one grind-organ man out of hundreds, maybe thousands, in this city! Sneak up on him and take him by surprise! Look here, Markman, you're not serious."

"I am deadly serious, French."

"Then, professor, one of us two is crazy, and it's not me. Crazy as bedlam!"

Markman sighed. "I was afraid you wouldn't see it."

"Well, I sure do not!"

"I'll have to do it by myself, I suppose."

"Do whatever you like. I've got other business. Rook, come along with me."

"You refuse to take my word for this man's liberty?" Markman asked hastily.

"I refuse to take your word."

"Think twice, French!"

"No. Not if I think a dozen times. Rook's my prisoner!"

The detective captain faced his rival with a flushed countenance that showed very clearly he meant to have his own way.

"Very well," Markman said, returning French's glare composedly. "I'll have to offer my services in this case. Lawrence, as quickly as I can get authority I'll see you and see that you are released. In the meantime go along with Captain French, who is an excellent officer and a very decent chap, but sometimes mistaken, very badly mistaken."

"Is that so!" French shouted. "Well, all I've got to say is I'm not cuckoo in the head yet, anyhow. Maybe you can kid the commissioner into letting you take charge of this case, but if you do, by heaven, he's a bigger fool than I think him! Go on and chase grind-organs, then! While you're doing that I'll have a case against this friend of yours that would convince a jury of deaf, dumb and blind men!"

The rivals faced one another for a moment of mute defiance.

French was openly contemptuous.

Ford Markman was quietly confident.

With a snort French turned away and led Lawrence Rook to the waiting car.

Markman remained in front of the house, watching them drive away.

"There goes a brave man, that French," he murmured. "A brave, honest public servant, who is also probably as thick-headed a donkey as ever wore an officer's badge!"

CHAPTER SEVEN

MARKMAN'S MUSICAL EVENING

THE commissioner sighed in a puzzled way when Ford Markman was ushered into his office.

"Captain French told me you would be calling soon," he said.

Markman smiled.

"Did Captain French tell you what my call is about?"

"He did."

"Then he also, no doubt, confided to you his belief that old age has impaired my mental faculties? In other words, I dare say he told you I was a fit inmate for a padded cell?"

"Well, he hinted at something like that. Of course I don't believe that!"

"Which proves you're sane, anyway!"

"And if you want to take charge of this Wilkes murder investigation," the commissioner went on, "you just have to say so and I'll give you the entire police force to work with. You have made good too many times, and helped my department out too many times, that you need never hesitate about asking any favor you like. And when all you ask is to help us once more, why——"

"Just the same," Markman said, "you find it rather embarrassing to discipline and upsetting to the routine if you put an outsider over your own men? I understand that! And I don't ask to take charge of this case or to hinder Captain French in any way."

"I don't mind admitting I'm glad to hear it!" the commissioner exclaimed. "But what do you want?"

"Two things. First, release Lawrence Rook. To imprison him in connection with this case is to do an irreparable harm to him. Because he is widely known, rich, responsible; the damage to his reputation would be fearful. Besides, your men can easily keep track of him now."

"Granted, Markman. I wouldn't arrest any man without better evidence than French has at present. Rook is free on his promise to keep in touch with us. The other thing?"

"Orders to your department to give me any co-operation I may need to conduct my own investigation."

The commissioner declared himself delighted to comply.

Thus Rook was presently at liberty again and Ford Markman free to carry out his own peculiar ideas.

Captain French met the two men during the afternoon.

"Chasing grind-organs?" he sneered.

"Yes," Markman said composedly.

"Wish you luck. It's going to keep you busy a long time."

"No. Not very long. Did you ever happen to think that every street organ bears a license issued by the city? That the name and address of its operator is on record and these men can be summoned in a few hours?"

French blinked. He did not say so, but he had never thought of that means of investigation."

"I expect to have them all rounded up by to-night," Markman said. "I've borrowed a hall in one of the sation-houses. If you're fond of music drop in to our concert to-night."

For a moment French's mouth hung wide open.

"Great jumping Jehoshaphat!" he exclaimed.

"It's going to be a great concert," Markman promised. "You'll come?"

"Come? D'you think I'd miss a comedy like that? Well, of all the damn fool ideas! You certainly get the diamond-studded championship belt! You bet I'll come!"

"Do," Markman urged cordially. "Be sure to. In the words of a famous character of a few years ago, we'll see who's loony now!"

He left French sputtering, but when he was out of earshot Markman said to Rook: "Just the same I wish that letter with your check in it could be found! It would go a long way to prove that your purpose in Peter Wilkes's house was at least not a murderous one."

"It must arrive!" Rook exclaimed. "I tell you I can't understand it. Can't the post-office find any trace?"

Markman shook his head.

Though he believed his friend implicitly, it certainly was odd that the check meant to repay Wilkes for the fraudulent painting had completely disappeared.

New York, accustomed to many queer gatherings, probably never saw a sight weirder than that presented in the hall of a precinct station-house that evening.

An innocent bystander might be justified in thinking that the organ-grinders of America were holding their national convention.

Men and women arrived by scores and hundreds. All had their organs with them.

There were fat, jolly Sicilians; lean, melancholy Spaniards; sentimental Germans; fiery gypsies, and all sorts of nondescripts.

Some of the men had long, silvery white hair and some no hair at all.

Others had brown faces adorned with spike-like mustachios, and even full-fledged beards.

Many were in some way maimed, minus an arm or leg or the use of their eyes.

Some were propelled in wheel chairs and carts.

Patrolmen all about the city had been assigned to rounding up the itinerant musicians. They had not been told the purpose of the gathering, but it was hinted that there was to be a checking up of licenses.

If, anywhere on Manhattan island or its environs, one lone, obscure chauffeur of perambulating music had been overlooked, nobody coming into the assembly room at nine o'clock that evening could have guessed it.

In a smaller room off the main hall Ford Markman, Lawrence Rook and Captain French, who had called, true to his promise, sat in a solemn row.

A patrolman officiated, bringing in the organ-grinders one at a time.

Each was bidden to play his repertory of tunes, then sent back to the main hall.

Ford Markman urged Rook, before the weird concert began:

"Lawrence, your safety may depend on this one experiment. You must think back to last night, and do your best to recall in every detail the few moments when you were aware that an organ was being played in front of Number Nine Queer street."

"But I didn't listen—not consciously!" Rook protested. "I knew it was playing, that's all, in the same way you know an elevated train is going past your window, but without stopping work to listen to it!"

"Exactly! Therefore you must make a supreme effort to put your mind in the condition it was last night at that moment. The organ played popular music first, I think you said?"

"Yes. Several tunes. I remember 'Broadway Rose' and that other song, 'Mammy.'"

"Listen closely, then, your life depends on it. Remember every mechanical instrument has its peculiarities, small imperfections—in a street organ often a missing note or a flatted note, or a peculiar limp in its meter, or a wheeziness in its lungs. Listen, with all your intelligence. Your life may depend upon it."

Number by number the strange concert went on before the audience of three.

Player after player came, played his repertory and was sent back, unapplauded.

The three men sat like solemn judges.

But inwardly French was shaking with laughter.

In Rook's face and Markman's he thought he read a growing disappointment and discomfiture.

He enjoyed their suffering immensely, for it proved him right in thinking Markman a fool.

The same old tunes were dinned into their ears again and again without let up or variety, until it seemed that human nerves could stand no more.

Most of the grind-organs in New York were playing the same music.

The jazz songs of last year prevailed.

A few added variety by playing those never dying favorites of the island, "Sidewalks of New York," "Rosy O'Grady" and the martial "Over There!"

But not one organ among them played anything faintly resembling the weird little Spanish air Lawrence Rook had heard just before Peter Wilkes was murdered.

When the last man had passed in review and the last note been ground out, Rook shook his head.

"I have not heard it played."

French snorted loudly.

"Huh! Well, I hope you've finished with this insane performance! Of all the damn fool ideas——"

"Wait!" Markman said sharply. "Lawrence, you remember what I said about mechanical peculiarities? Have you heard any organ that reminded you of last night when it played 'Mammy' or 'Broadway Rose'?"

"Yes," Rook said promptly. "Two. I noted the license numbers."

He handed a slip of paper to Markman.

"Send these men in," Markman instructed the patrolman.

While French gaped the two organists repeated their performance.

"I think it is that man," Rook said, pointing

out a short, jolly looking roly-poly with a mahogany hued face and an enormous mustache.

"Detain this other man," Markman instructed. "Dismiss all the rest. And now, what is your name, please?"

The human dumpling owned to Tony Marossi.

"You play in the west side district just below Fourteenth street, near Queen Court?" Markman asked.

"Si, si, senor. Oh, yes-s-s."

"You were playing there last night?"

"Oh, si, senor!"

"You played your organ in front of Number Nine Queen Court last night at about half-past seven o'clock?"

Tony Marossi hesitated.

His brown eyes widened with alarm. He shook his head.

"No, senor, not las' night. I—I was not play las' night. I taka da organ to be fix'——"

"Now look here, Marossi," Markman said gravely, "we mean you no harm. You aren't going to get into any trouble. The police have nothing against you, nothing at all!"

Marossi sighed and looked doubtful.

"You can help the police, if you will," Markman urged. "Tell us exactly what happened when you took your organ in front of the house at Number 9 Queen Court last night——"

But, senor, I can't tell you! No, no, no! I was-a not at da house at all. I was-a not in Queen Court!"

Marossi evidently was telling the exact truth.

"You were not there?" Markman repeated.

"No, no! So help me, senor, by the Holy Virgin, I swear you I was-a not there las' night!"

"Ha!" Markman exclaimed suddenly, "but your organ was! Come! I see you admit it. Your organ was taken by somebody else last night? That is so?"

Marossi threw up his hands in amazement.

He burst into rapid conversation, too fast and too spiced with his own tongue to be reported here. The gist of it was a confession.

Tony Marossi had met a strange adventure with an unknown man the night before. He had seen the man several times and each time the man had given him a dollar. He thought the man mad or an American millionaire such as he had been told about.

He played the neighborhood regularly and during the last week the man had met him on the street each day and handed him a one-dollar bill.

Marossi naturally was very enthusiastic about this strange patron of his art.

When he encountered him the night before he had bowed low and removed his hat with a broad smile, anticipating the present of another dollar bill.

Instead the man had asked him into a house, taken him to a furnished room and offered him some cakes and a glass of wine. Marossi was now of the opinion that the wine had been drugged. He knew wine, drank great quantities of it when he could get it, and of this wine he had but three glasses before he fell asleep.

When he woke it was past nine o'clock.

His host was sitting across the little table as he had last seen him laughing at Tony.

He declared that Tony had taken too much and joked him hilariously.

Finally he gave Tony one more dollar bill and saw him and his organ to the street door, where he bade them an affectionate good-night.

Such, in plain words, was the story of Tony Marossi.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ALL QUESTIONS ANSWERED

FORD MARKMAN sprang to his feet.

"Captain French!" he exclaimed, "will you help?"

"Help how?"

"Will you arrest the murderer of Peter Wilkes? It's a job that needs a man like you. And I'd like to see you get the credit you deserve for your courage and ability."

"Where in blazes is the murderer of Wilkes?" French sputtered, glaring about the room much as if he thought him concealed in the station-house. "And who is he?"

"Who, I don't know. Where, we must ask

Marossi. What street and what number is this house where you went with the man who gave you wine?" Markman demanded of the bewildered street organist.

Marossi stammered the address.

"We'll have to hurry," Markman gasped. "It may be too late now!"

Rook ran beside him. French joined them.

The address was a house that rented furnished rooms, a place not far from Queen Court.

The landlady recognized the man Markman described, relying upon the description Marossi had given him. She thought her lodger had left the city for the time. He meant to go that evening.

The three men hurried to the room as directed by the landlady.

The door opened as they drew near and a man hurried out, a man in a light overcoat carrying a hand satchel.

Markman barred his way.

French seized him by the shoulder.

"You're under arrest," the detective declared. "Wanted in connection with the murder of Peter J. Wilkes."

Their prisoner eyed them a moment as if in doubt. Then suddenly he shrugged his shoulders.

"All right," he agreed. "You got me. But how in hell you guessed it I can't figure out!"

At the precinct station the man dictated a statement that confessed everything.

His real name was Dane—Kendall Dane. He had known Wilkes and been associated with him in several shady enterprises some fifteen years before.

One of Wilkes's schemes had been the development of oil wells in Texas, especially that part having to do with selling stock. Kendall Dane had been nominally president and general manager of the oil well company.

Wilkes supplied necessary capital and brains, but kept in the background.

The scheme was a vicious, barefaced swindle.

The supposed oil field existed only in printer's ink.

When the swindle came to grief, as it was fated to, Kendall Dane was prosecuted for it.

Nothing could be proved against Peter Wilkes, who took the profits and kept safely out of reach of the law.

Dane went to prison for fifteen years. By good conduct he had been released thirteen months before the expiration of his term.

Dane had but one thought, one ambition, to even score with Wilkes. He tracked him down finally. But Wilkes was cautious. He had retired with a good-sized fortune made by swindling and Dane's call was not unexpected.

Wilkes refused to see Dane and his servant turned Dane away from the door.

Dane meant to murder Wilkes. Only Wilkes's death would satisfy him for the fifteen years of living death Wilkes had condemned him to.

But the murderer could not carry out his plan until he was face to face with Wilkes.

And he was afraid to linger in the neighborhood lest Wilkes point him out to the police, in which case his long prison record would surely result in trouble for him.

Dane went away and thought and planned. Finally he saw a way to kill Wilkes and get off undetected.

When the oil swindle was at the height of its success Peter Wilkes had married a beautiful young woman, a Spanish girl of whom he was undoubtedly very fond.

Dane visited them often in their home.

In the evenings the young wife often sang for Wilkes and their greatest favorite among songs was an odd little Spanish serenade, a folk song which had never been published but was handed down from one singer to another.

Wilkes's wife died the first year of their married life.

Dane recalled the song very well.

He knew also, by inquiry, that Wilkes had a curious interest in street musicians, so much of an interest that once the neighbors had complained he attracted all the grind-organs in New York.

Dane understood music well enough to transcribe the notes of the old Spanish serenade. Then he had a music house cut these notes in a paper record roll such as the street organs use.

His original plan was to hire an organ and impersonate a musician. But there were

dangers attached to this. The use of Tony Marossi's organ proved much safer and simpler.

And when Peter Wilkes was attracted to the door by that gay little Spanish air his dead wife had sung so often he found apparently another wandering street musician and spoke to him without fear, inviting him in to question him about the music he played.

Thus Dane had carried out his plan without trouble.

Detective Captain Oscar French was amazed and humiliated. But the man could lose with better grace then he fought.

"You beat me, Professor," he declared. "When it comes to brains I certainly must hand it to you! I can't compete against your reasoning."

Ford Markman grasped French's proffered hand and shook it cordially.

"I had the advantage of a brain trained to solve puzzles," he declared. "Nothing particularly creditable to me in that. The moment Rook mentioned a street grind-organ that played a tune never heard before I guessed that something was queer about it. Nothing that ever happened in Queer street is stranger than a new tune that comes from a street piano!"

"Well, you taught me a lot, anyway," French admitted. "But there's one thing! I'd like to know why, if Rook mailed a check like he says he did, that check cannot be found!"

Markman shook his head.

"I'll admit that's one puzzle that's too deep for me!"

And at that moment the telephone bell rang.

The caller was Lawrence Rook, who had gone to his own home.

"The check is found!" Rook announced.

"In my excitement last night I addressed it to Wilkes and forgot to add the city to the address. The letter was returned this afternoon for lack of sufficient address."

Markman retailed the news to French.

"It's always the hardest puzzles that have the simplest answers!" he chuckled.

STRANGE PLANT GROWTH

THERE are few plants in the vegetable kingdom so curious in their growth as the parasite plants, with one of which, at least, you are all familiar—the mistletoe. These vegetable parasites are plants that derive their sustenance from other plants and have no roots of their own.

The mistletoe, whose waxen berries excite our admiration, clings by means of a viscid fluid that exudes from the berries to any tree upon which they happen to be dropped by the mistletoe thrush, a bird peculiarly fond of them.

The mistletoe is found most abundantly upon the oak, from which it was cut in ancient times by the Druids to be used in their religious worship.

Another peculiar parasite, common in low, wet places in the South, is familiarly known as "love vine." It has not much foliage. If a piece of it is thrown upon a tree or a bush it will immediately begin to grow. In time the tree will be covered with a net-work of threads, and when it is seen it may be taken as a warning that malaria is lurking in the vicinity, because the vine flourishes in marshy ground. Strange to say, the vine in no way interferes with the growth of the plant which it covers.

In the Indian Territory is a remarkable parasite called the air plant. You will frequently find the ground covered with what seems luxuriant vegetation, for this plant has a rich foliage of deep and abundant green. However, if you lift one of these little twigs you will find it attached to a strong, woody stem. Continuing to lift it and following it for yards, you will find that the vine is not clinging to anything, but is simply lying upon other plants, and if you follow it its whole length you will come to the other end of the stem, without root and attached to absolutely nothing.

Under the plant will be only dead twigs and stems of other vegetation, for nothing can live under this life-capping vine.

Window Glass

TO the uninitiated, sitting by the window, tapping the pane idly as you look through it, it would seem almost an impossibility to say that the window glass was blown, and yet it is all simple enough when we have seen the process. There are five glass factories in Streator—and to digress here just a little, let me say that they are the only "light" things in the muddiest of all muddy Illinois towns—that make various kinds of glassware, from a huge window glass 60 by 48 to the tiniest of little perfume bottles.

Having seen bottles, etc., blown, my steps naturally took the direction of the largest of the window-glass factories, and, having obtained permission from the superintendent, we were soon in what is known as the "furnace room." Here the main work of glass-making, including the blowing process, is done. It is a novel sight, and one I shall not forget soon. The lurid light of the many glowing furnaces, the quietly but quickly moving forms of the workmen gliding around in and among the shadows, made a sight that would require only a weak imagination to seem all but demoniacal. I am hardly well enough acquainted with the art to describe the process minutely, and should any "boss blower" happen to see this article he will please criticise me lightly.

To continue: First, be it known that the glass of commerce is composed principally of white sand, though arsenic, lime, a soda ash of some kind, and some minor chemicals, in small quantities, are essential. The sand used by the Streator factories is obtained from the bed of the Fox River, at Ottawa, and is very fine and almost a pure white. The first step is to free the sand from all impurities. This is done by washing it in huge vats. After being washed and the compounds completed, consisting of the various articles already mentioned, the mixture is put into a huge crucible called "the pot." You have all seen those little burned-clay crucibles jewelers use. Well, this is quite similar, only it is as large as a hogshead.

The whole device being on wheels, it is rolled into the furnace-room, and the pot placed in one of the ten huge furnaces. This operation is called "placing the pot."

Under the intense heat of the furnace, so many degrees that I am afraid to tell you—the fires never go out from September 1st to July 31st—the mixture gradually melts, looking like molten iron, only of a more whitish color. Then men called gatherers, as their name implies, gather a ball of this fluid sand by dipping the pipe into the crucible and withdrawing it, allowing what clings to the end to partially cool by slight contact with warm water.

This process is continued until a ball is gathered as large as a water pail. This is then rolled around and around in an iron bowl until it assumes a pear shape. Then the "blower" takes it, and now comes the hardest task in glass blowing. In starting this solid red-hot, half-molten mass to expand and assume a shape something like our common glass, so great are his efforts that his cheeks expand to an enormous size and the sweat starts out in huge drops. But closely watching the half-transparent, glowing mass, you see a little blubber start in the center, and it rapidly assumes a regular demijohn shape, say two feet long by one in diameter.

All this time it has been rapidly revolved by the operator, partaking shape from this iron bowl; having become sufficiently cool and hard enough to bear lifting, it is, by a nice movement, swung upon a crane and thrust into the furnace, where, by the exact nicety of long experience, it is kept in the intense heat until half melted. It is then withdrawn and swung by the operator from an elevated platform round and round his head, much as a professional swings an Indian club, meanwhile forcing air into it and subjecting it to the heat when necessary, until he has a red-hot cylinder

of perfect glass, exact in proportions and of uniform thickness, five feet in length and about fifteen inches in diameter.

This is then allowed to cool, and is cut to exact lengths by stretching a small cord of molten glass around the cylinder, allowing it to harden and then touching it with a cold iron, which causes the warm crystals to contract so quick that it cracks right off as smooth and even as a carpenter could saw a board. These cylinders are then cut lengthwise in the same manner, and are then subjected to a heated furnace intense enough to cause them to wilt down perfectly flat. This is called the "flattening process." The sheets are then revolved around on an endless moving platform something like a straw carrier of a threshing machine until gradually cooled and tempered. They are carried to the cutting and packing-room, where they are made into various sized sheets, or more properly panes, to suit the demand, and packed in the manner familiar to all, and sent to all parts of the world.

This factory only a short time ago sent a large cargo to Australia. To conclude, it might not be out of the way to add that the factory I visited had twelve blowers. They all belong to "The Glass Blowers' Union," and are permitted to blow only so many cylinders a day—ninety being the number, I believe. They earn from $125 to $200 a month, according to the number of days they work. But it is a fatal trade.

The poisonous gases, etc., the blowers inhale, more or less, renders long life in the glass-blowing business an impossibility. It is a rarity to meet a glass-blower over thirty-five years old.

ABOUT EARTH-EATERS

IN several parts of the world the dearth of food compels men to nourish themselves with certain kinds of earth which possess a true nutritive power. Travelers are too unanimous on this point to allow of our doubting it. The fact, too, was known at a far more distant epoch than is generally supposed, for it is mentioned in the old and curious book of Naude in defence of the great men accused of magic. It is there said that certain earths of the Valley of Hebron are good to eat.

Toward the mouth of the Orinoco the Ottomacs, a native tribe, at certain seasons of the year nourish themselves to a great extent with a fat ferruginous clay, of which they consume as much as a pound and a half a day. Spix and Martius say that a similar custom is found on the banks of the Amazon; and those learned travelers relate that the natives there eat this earth even when there is no lack of more substantial food. We also know that an edible clay is sold in the markets of Bolivia. Gliddon tells us that there are a number of earth-eating tribes in North America, and there are clay eaters in the Carolina States and also in Georgia.

Naturalists, struck with these accounts, were anxious to make out the composition of these edible earths and to their astonishment discovered that some of them were species of clays containing a considerable number of fresh water infusoria or microscopic shells; so that we might suppose that these clays owe their properties to animal matter they have retained and that it is this which furnishes man with this truly antediluvian food, composed of the remains of microscopic animals.

But Nature has not stopped here; she has now and then produced a perfect animalized meal. There is nothing necessary but to make it into bread. In fact, it is well known that in time of dearth the Laplanders nourish themselves with a white mineral dust, which they substitute for cereal products. Retius, who examined this meal, found that it was composed of nineteen species of infusoria, similar to those now found around Berlin; and the scientist has shown that this skeleton dust, which is also found in Finland and Sweden, owes it nutritive qualities to a certain amount of animal substance which chemical analysis detected after so many ages.

Son of Judas

by

Edgar Daniel Kramer

AS Ordayne sat at his table on the edge of the dancing space of the Bal Masque, leaning a bit forward, a long slender hand toying with his wineglass, a dream in his eyes, a ghost of a smile upon his thin lips, he became the cynosure of all eyes in the throng of masked dancers—of scowling, threatening masculine looks; of laughing, luring, inviting feminine glances. In his meticulous evening clothes he looked like a million dollars, but behind his easy assurance he was wondering just how elastic a ten-spot can be and racking his brains for ways and means of annexing more coin of the realm in any way other than by working for it. Ordayne was imbued with the idea that the world owed him a living; he was ever ready to collect and not at all finicky as to the means. Although at the moment apparently lost in thought, he was keenly alive to his surroundings, looking to the main chance. He was intent upon a tall, lithe brunette and her partner as they danced. The girl was brazenly watching him in turn. Ordayne chuckled when her escort remonstrated. The girl laughed mockingly and shook herself free of his arms. She came straight to Ordayne, who appeared not to be noticing her. Her companion followed a step or two, protesting as he advanced, then turned away abruptly, muttering angrily. The girl took a chair at Ordayne's table. She lit a cigarette and, leaning with her elbows on the table, stared at him fixedly from behind her mask. Ordayne turned with a feigned start and met her steady gaze.

"Hello!" she smiled. "Been dreaming?"

"I'm dreaming now!" he exclaimed.

She laughed.

"Have a drink and prove that you are real," he suggested.

She nodded. As she poured the wine he studied her. Her hair was black, as were her eyes, while her lips were full and as red as warm blood. She wore a low-cut dress of black velvet that revealed and enhanced the witching curves of her figure, the delicate rise and fall of her bosom as she breathed. She was a creature of old ivory, faintly glowing with the tints of dawn.

"To our better acquaintance." Ordayne clinked glasses with her.

"Yes," she echoed. "To our better acquaintance!"

It was their third dance together. The orchestra was playing a seductive waltz. They were silent. A subtle fragrance of warm flesh and faint lilac emanated from her. He could feel the beating of her heart as she rested against him, and heard her breath coming in little gasps. The woman was aflame with

sudden passion. Ordayne laughed to himself and pondered how the incident could be turned to his profit. Suddenly the girl shuddered violently. Choking back a scream, she endeavored to swing Ordayne around. A shot rang out; a burning iron seemed to plunge through Ordayne's right shoulder; there came calls and shouts and the rush of feet; the lights blinked, danced, wavered.

"He's shot you, the mad brute!" he heard the girl saying, and her voice came to him as though from far away.

Ordayne felt himself growing weak, crumbling, sinking—then came utter blackness.

He wakened with a start and blinked about him.

"What happened?" he gasped as he tried to sit up, only to fall back weakly.

"Terry shot you," the woman answered, bending over him.

"Terry?"

"The fellow I was with when I met you."

"Where am I?"

"In my apartment."

Ordayne sighed and settled more comfortably into the pillows. She smoothed the coverlets.

"How long have I been here?" he asked.

"Five weeks yesterday," she replied.

"I've been pretty sick, eh?"

"Out of your head most of the time," she exclaimed. "We worked over you day and night, the doctor and Terry and I."

"Terry?"

"He's a good sort," she laughed. "He was here when we carried you in. He helped a lot, but he's gone now."

"Why'd you bring me here?" he queried abruptly. "I'm only a bother."

"Well," she retorted, speaking as though she were culling her words carefully, "I felt that I had gotten you into this fix, and so I ought to help you out of it. I guess that's a good enough reason," she ended a bit defiantly as she colored and turned from him.

Ordayne watched her through narrowed eyes. Her beauty was dazzling, but to him she was just a pawn in the game of existence. Then the curtains parted and an old lean gray ghost of a man entered softly.

"How's the target to-day?" he addressed the girl jocularly.

"Ask him," she advised dryly. "Here's the doctor," she explained to Ordayne.

"Hello!" The old man leaned over the foot of the bed.

"Hello!" Ordayne echoed.

"You've been one heluva nuisance!" the doctor snorted.

"You're kidding me, doc." Ordayne became ironical.

"Kidding?" the doctor growled. "If it hadn't been for Rose you'd be making merry with the worms by this time. Terry would have croaked you sure. She swung you away just as Terry fired."

The curtains settled into place behind the girl as she left the men together.

"You mean to say that woman saved my life!" Ordayne laughed coldly.

"Sure!" the physician answered. "She caught sight of him and knew he couldn't possibly miss at the distance. She tried to swing in front of you. She was willing to take the lead herself. Terry told me."

"Why?" Ordayne asked dubiously.

"Can't you see?"

Ordayne shook his head.

"If you could have seen her these past weeks," the doctor continued, "maybe you would understand. She's worked over you day and night without sleeping. She even submitted to blood-transfusion for you. It was your only chance."

"You mean?"

"She loves you, you idiot!" the doctor snarled. "She loves you!"

Ordayne was alone and smiling when Rose re-entered the room. He seized her hands as she leaned over him. She tried to draw them away. Her face was turned from him, and her bosom rose and fell tempestuously under the stress of her emotion.

"Rose!" Ordayne whispered. "Look at me!"

She shook her head, but her hands were fluttering in his.

"Rose," he went on, "the old saw-bones has been telling me things."

"He's a fool!" she breathed brokenly. "An old fool!"

"He told me that you saved my life," he persisted.

She said nothing.

"He said you were even willing to die for me."

"Yes!" she murmured so low that he scarcely heard it.

"Why?" he asked.

Then she looked at him. Cold-blooded, cruel, calculating, selfish though he was, the wonder of her eyes blinded him. She smiled tremulously as the color mounted in her cheeks and sudden tears gleamed upon her long lashes. She stood swaying above him.

"Because I love you!" she answered simply, then sank on her knees beside the bed, her head upon his breast.

As Ordayne grew stronger he became impatiently insistent upon their getting away.

"I'm just dying for the bright lights," he kept telling Rose, who always put him off with evasive excuses.

Then he took matters into his own hands and went out. He was too weak to walk far and as he was broke a taxi was out of the question. He returned to the apartment in a little while. The old doctor was waiting for him.

"Trying to queer the game?" the doctor demanded with a ferocious scowl, as Ordayne entered.

"What's the answer?" Ordayne asked innocently, concealing his eagerness.

"Aren't you wise?"

"What are you driving at?" Ordayne appeared puzzled.

"Don't you know Rose is in hiding here?"

"What?"

"She and Terry were lying low here dodging the 'bulls'."

"But both of them were out the night Terry winged me."

"They were masked, you fool!" the doctor snorted. "They had been here so long that they just had to get out for a breath of air. Their masks protected them then."

"Rose is out now."

"In the dark," the old man sneered, "with a veil and a cloak on a woman is in hiding anywhere. Does she ever go out except at night?" he snapped.

Ordayne whistled.

"There you are!"

"Why is she hiding?" Ordayne questioned.

"There's a big reward hanging over the girl," the doctor explained.

"You're some nifty little joker, doc," Ordayne laughed, but he was rapidly piecing things together. "What has she done?"

"She and Terry are wanted in the Wahlman jewel robbery, that's all," the doctor cackled sarcastically. "There's five thousand on each of them, and here you go floating around as if the 'bulls' aren't on the lookout. You make me sick, you do, and after all that girl's done for you!"

"Is this stuff you're spilling straight, doc," Ordayne queried.

"Straight? Ask Rose."

When Rose returned from her walk with eyes shining and cheeks aglow Ordayne took her in his arms. She lifted her flushed face to his.

"I have found what love really is!" she smiled up at him. "Dear, my dear, hold me close—close!"

"And where are the jewels?" he asked abruptly.

She drew away and her eyes became troubled.

"The jewels?" she parried, staring at him.

"The Wahlman jewels," he explained.

They stood facing each other. Ordayne was dominant, insistent; the girl was deathly pale, and her hands opened and closed spasmodically.

"The Wahlman jewels?" she echoed.

"The old saw-bones told me everything." Ordayne spoke softly. "He spilled the beans."

"Terry has them," she answered. "He is keeping them until we can get away safely."

A look of annoyance and disappointment clouded Ordayne's features momentarily.

"But you didn't steal them?" he leaned toward her.

"I did," she breathed hopelessly. "Terry and I pulled the job, and we've been under cover here ever since."

Ordayne was alone in the apartment the following evening. Rose had kissed him and gone out. Taut as a fiddle-string, he had listened to the click of the latch and the sound of her receding steps as she went down the corridor. Then he rose quickly from the

chair in which he was sprawling and crossed noiselessly to the telephone.

"I can't get the jewels," he was muttering, "so the five thousand will have to do. I'd make it ten if that guy Terry were only here, too. Five thousand iron-men is not a whole lot, but every little bit helps in these days. It will stake me over the winter anyhow," and he was smiling evilly, as he lifted the receiver.

"Police Headquarters!" he whispered. "This headquarters?" He tapped sharply upon the mouth-piece three times, then two, and then three again. "This is No. 293 on the job again. I have something big, mighty big this time. The rewards still standing for the Wahlman robbery? Five thousand on each of the criminals? I've got one of them ready for the picking!" He was gloating now. "I've got the woman in the case. A little of the right kind of persuasion may get her to squeal on her pals. I'm broke and need the coin. In an hour. I'll be waiting here and I'll be the most surprised man in the world when you chaps swoop in on us. In an hour. Apartment Five-C. The——"

Then the door crashed open and Terry hurtled in, followed by Rose. Ordayne snapped up the receiver without finishing and pulled himself erect, sudden fear showing in his eyes.

"Get away from there!" Terry snarled. "You shoulda let me croak him the first time, Rose. Didn't I tell you he was yellow? Didn't I say this bird couldn't be trusted? Didn't I, now? Haven't I doped the yellow pup from the start? It's a good thing I have been hanging around and keeping my eyes on his nibs!"

Rose was silent. She could only stare at Ordayne with stricken eyes.

"Didn't I tell you he was yellow?" Terry repeated. "Back to bed, you squealer! Rose risked her life for you, she saved you from this gun of mine, she even came across with her own blood to bring you back from hell, so you could sell her for a heap of dirty coin, you cur. No monkey-shines! I'm in a hurry! Into the bedroom!"

And when the plain-clothes men finally arrived Rose and Terry had made their getaway, but sprawled upon the tumbled bed, still warm, silenced forever, evincing absolutely no surprise, and with his money problems solved for good and all, lay the Thing that had once been Ordayne.

AN ODD DOMICILE

ONE of the oddest domiciles on earth is that erected at Yokohama by a noted Japanese bacteriologist. It may be described as a dust-proof, air-proof, germ-proof building of glass, which stands on the open, unshaded grounds of the hospital at Yokohama.

The house is forty-four feet long, twenty-three feet wide and seventeen feet high. Large panes of glass, one-half inch thick and about four inches apart, are set in iron frames so as to form the sides of a cellular building block. Of these blocks the walls are constructed.

There are no window sashes, the air escape being through several small openings around the upper part of the second story, but through which no air from the outside is admitted.

The air supply is obtained from a considerable distance, forced through a pipe and carefully filtered through cotton wool to cleanse it of bacteria.

To insure further protection and sterilization, the air is driven against a glycerine-coated plate of glass, which captures all the germs the wool spares. The few germs brought into the house in the clothes of the visitors soon die in the warm sunlight with which the place is flooded.

The space between the glasses of the building blocks is filled with a solution of salts which absorb the heat of the sun, so that the rooms of the house are much cooler than those protected by the thickest shades.

So effective is the system of regulating the temperature that a few hours of sunlight, even in freezing weather, will render the house habitable. It is only when several cloudy days follow in succession artificial heat is needed.

When Human Hearts Were Trumps

By JOE BURKE

PART II

CHAPTER FOUR

THE town was fast asleep when Briggs and his charge entered, dusty and tired. At the Lucky Chance saloon no sign of life was visible. They then turned their steps towards a tumble-down shack with a signboard over the door. Scrawled on it was the word "Sheriff." He was the type of cow-country officer, not unlike Tod Willis of Silver Creek, and a peeved sheriff, too, at what he defined at first "Two damn fool tenderfoots."

After Briggs had made his mission known and tickled the sheriff with an offer to drink, the old man winked knowingly and grinned.

"Don't know what I'm gonna do 'bout him," he nodded, his frowzy head in the direction of Dimmock, who was watching the morning sun. "Jail's full now. Got a bunch o' rustlers last night. Plenty room to-morry night, an' you'll get a chance to see what we do to cattle thieves bimeby."

Detective Briggs finally decided to get a room in the Lucky Chance when it opened for business; and he would keep his prisoner with him. He must get some sleep, that was a sure bet. "So here goes," he concluded as they headed for the hotel again.

When Briggs awoke the afternoon sun was pouring through the closed window. Dimmock was laying on his back snoring. The heat in the room was oppressive. Swinging himself from the humid bed, he stepped to the window and threw it open. Several deep inhalations of the pure mountain air that wafted into the room was like nectar, he thought. A form carrying a shotgun in the crook of his arm, attracted by the noise of the window opening, swung into view and looked up. Briggs waved his hand, the armed figure nodded and disappeared.

"That bird was onto his job all right. Glad I didn't need him."

The sheriff had posted a man on guard at the detective's request.

As Briggs stood gazing meditatively on the scene outside—a few straggling cowpunchers, a mangy dog and a half-dozen ragged urchins shooting marbles—a fusillade of shots rang out, and a swirl of dust arose, a troop of horsemen galloped in view and pulled up before the Lucky Chance. He learned at a glance that they were the sheriff's posse, as the old man was riding at their head. He also noted that they surrounded several hatless men whose hands were bound behind their backs. Those were the rustlers, he figured, and the poor devils were on their way to be strung up. "Rotten place and rotten law," he thought, with a tinge of aversion. He turned away as a loud knock came on the door. Dimmock was now sitting on the side of the bed rubbing his sleepy eyes.

At Briggs's bidding the door was swung open and the sheriff of Bethoud stalked into the room.

"Howdy," he greeted. Dimmock looked up and the sheriff stared. "Seems I've seen you before, haven't I, stranger?" he added.

Detective Briggs looked from one to the other. What new intricacy was now to develop that would make his duty more trying. He laughed anxiously as he advanced to meet the officer and shake his hand.

"You saw him this morning, wasn't it, sheriff?" he smiled.

"Why, yes; come to think of it 'twas."

Briggs sighed. Dimmock, ignoring the officer, arose and crossed the room to where a washbowl and a pitcher of water were standing on a rickety stand and proceeded to wash his hands and face.

The sheriff eyed him narrowly, then turned to the detective.

"Put your prisoner in the lockup; there's lots of room there now." He jerked his head towards the waiting riders outside. "Come on an' 'tend our little hemp stretchin'."

"Did they get a trial?" ventured Briggs guardedly.

"Shore," he grinned significantly. "Why?"

"Oh, nothing. Your laws are different from ours. You'll excuse me, sheriff, if I decline the invitation, as I am expecting to get word at any time that our train will be ready to resume its journey."

"As yo' like," he grunted, starting for the door. "But you'll not hit the trail East fo' some time, jedgin' by the way those hombres are workin' o'er there at ther railroad."

Briggs and Dimmock were eating supper in their room after the sheriff's departure.

"Was you ever in this burg before?" asked the detective.

"No," answered Dimmock shortly, gulping down a glass of water. "But I've heard about the place, and I know that Jim Bethoud runs the crookedest game in Wyoming. He's a leach, that same Jim."

Night's mantle of darkness had now shrouded the little cow town. Animated shadows could be seen flitting to and fro on the obscured street in the yellow gleam of light that shone through the dirty windows of the Lucky Chance.

The tig-tang of a piano could be heard above the din of chinking glasses and the tipsy clamor of the drinkers. The Eastern sleuth tossed aside a thumb-soiled and dog-eared book he was perusing, arose and walked from the room and out on a balcony that looked down on the saloon. Regardless of the fact that a certain prohibition law had been enacted in Washington, it apparently was void in Bethoud. Briggs was about to turn from the scene with disgust when his eyes fixed themselves on the roulette-wheel and the several card games that were going full blast. How that glittering, revolving disk and the tantalizing little ball kindled the passion flame within him! The clicking of the chips was music to his soul. With an oath at his weakness he turned again to leave the alluring temptation when he heard his name called, and the sheriff, who was looking up from beneath the gallery, was motioning him to come down.

"There's a drink comin' to me, Briggs, fo' losin' my beauty sleep this mornin'. Come on down an' pay your debt, an' look around some. I'll put a man up there to watch that galoot."

The detective nodded acquiescently and entered his room.

"I'm going downstairs for a while, Dimmock," he made known to his prisoner, who was standing at the open window looking out into the darkness. "Will I need to use those?" he finished, eyeing his prisoner sharply and the open window before him. Briggs was holding a pair of handcuffs in his hand.

"No, Mr. Briggs, not unless you want to. I gave you my word, and it'd take more than that scurvy bunch that the sheriff calls deputies to hold me if I intended to break away. I'm your prisoner, not his. I'm in hopes that some day I can go back to—to them straight. You'd better post a man out there; you'll feel better."

The detective started for the door. When he heard the footfalls of the assigned guard approaching Dimmock stepped to his side.

"Mr. Briggs," he began earnestly, "it's none of my business, an' don't think I'm buttin' in, but I've heard of you when I was in the East, an' it was common talk about your gambling. Don't get sore now, but take my advice and leave all games in the Lucky Chance alone. They're all as crooked as the devil."

Dimmock had touched a vital chord that stung the Eastern detective. That his weakness should be flaunted in his face by a holdup man—and his prisoner at that—ruffled him.

"Thanks," he snapped brusquely. "I know what I'm doing."

CHAPTER FIVE

WITHIN two hours from the time that Detective Briggs sat down to woo the god of chance he had dropped nine hundred dollars at the poker table. Not an enormous sum to lose in the Lucky Chance, but a fortune to the loser. The losing gambler's pallor marked his face as he arose from the table and strode over to the bar.

"Luck's against yo' t'-night," commented Jim Bethoud, who was leaning against the bar. "Have a drink? Broke?"

Briggs poured out his drink, and nodded slowly to the latter question.

"Hard luck," voiced the Lucky Chance owner in his oily voice. "A hundred or so on the wheel would change yore luck, maybe."

On his way to his room Briggs paused to watch the wheel as it hummed merrily under the watchful eye of the croupier. The little tantalizing ball of fate was mocking him again. Jim Bethoud's innuendos had created a conception in his mind that he could not banish, try as he may. Again the god of chance spurred him on.

At midnight that same night Detective John Briggs, the eminent member of the Criminal Intelligence Department, staggered drunkenly into his room a ruined man! Twenty-three thousand dollars that was entrusted to his care, the stolen money of the Capitalist National Bank, was in the keeping of Jim Bethoud's croupier!

Paul Dimmock looked up from his book when the detective reeled into the room. He first fancied that Briggs had imbibed too freely. But when he noted the drawn, ashy face of the officer he conjectured the symptoms.

"Cleaned yo' out?" he asked laconically.

Briggs nodded dejectedly.

"Buck up, Mr. Briggs; it's a gambler's chance."

"Yes, Dimmock, I am ruined—ruined, do you understand? I'm done! My name, manhood and the woman I was going to marry—God help me, all swept away in a few hours!"

Dimmock, perplexed at the detective's vociferous outburst, and unaware of the extent and gravity of his loss, gave him a look of contempt. "A tin-horn gambler," crept into his mind. A tinge of scorn had supplanted the wholesome regard he had fostered for Briggs.

"You're a poor loser, Briggs. What is the loss of a few hundred dollars compared to my loss? Buck up, don't be a squealer! This is the West, and for God's sake don't let them think that you're a quitter!"

His voice had risen in a crescendo, almost truculent.

Briggs raised a haggard face to his scoffer, who was now standing towering over him. In a tone that was hardly audible he murmured:

"The bank money—I—I gambled it all away."

Dimmock staggered back as if struck a blow.

"Good God, Briggs! You don't mean—— God, you're sure in deep! What did you do it for? You say that you've some one that loves you, trusts and believes in you, and still you'd make yourself a thief! Yes, a thief, I said! You're a thousand times worse than I am! You've had a chance in your life, and I didn't until it was too late! God help her!" he cried. "The ones that love us must suffer for our damnable doings!"

When he spoke again his voice contained a calmer note.

"To tell you truthfully, Briggs, I am more sorry for her than for you. You've used me white, but snapped my head off when I wised you up to Bethoud's crooked game. But what's the use of bawling over what's done? Let me think." He glanced at the detective's watch that laid on the crude washstand where he had put it before going down into the saloon. "Twelve-thirty," he muttered. "The game'll be open till they're all broke."

The strident laughter and fierce outbursts that seeped through the wooden partition indicated plainly that the revelers were by no means "broke" yet.

"Listen to me, Briggs," said Dimmock determinately. His voice was tranquil as he went on. "I've doped this whole thing out, an' can see only one way where there's a ghost of a chance to straighten it out."

He tiptoed to the door and pulled it open. Looking up and down the narrow gallery, he closed it again and turned the key in the lock.

"You can take this or leave it," he continued in the same calm tone, "but this is the only way. It's a long chance, and I'm runnin' a chance of losing out—maybe my life. But I'm game for to try it, an' ask no come-back. It's for her, your girl, Briggs. You mustn't break her heart like I'm doin'. Maybe you'll help me come back East?"

For several minutes Dimmock outlined his plan, crying down Briggs's spasmodic, impetuous protests. The result was that his forcible persuasion won.

"His game is crooked, I'm tellin' you. He's

a damn crook, anyway. It's lucky that Sheriff Willis turned over my two six-guns to you, an' that ol' shirt they're rolled in 'll help some."

The last few straggling gamblers had just turned from the wheel of chance in disgust, and the croupier was removing his green eyeshade, when the door of the saloon was opened and closed so silently that none had heard or noticed it.

"Hands up!" was the intruder's preliminary salutation as all eyes turned to the figure confronting them.

It was a heavy body with a slight crouch. A ragged tartan shirt covered his arms and torso, the head was covered with a soft slouch hat, and the face was hidden behind a red bandanna handkerchief, leaving only two narrowed, glinting eyes visible.

With an oath Jim Bethoud's hand flew to his hip; then thinking better of it, he raised both hands in the air. There was something peculiarly business-like in the two long-barreled revolvers which the intruder held, in spite of the fact that he was outnumbered nearly fifty to one.

"Everybody claw for the moon," said the voice sharply. "Reach for it, or you'll keep it company! You, Bethoud, stand away from the bar an' back to the wall! That's better, an' mind what I'm tellin' yo', Bethoud, that the Lucky Chance will change owners if yo' don't behave."

The figure was now facing the croupier at the roulette table, having herded the others into a mass against the wall.

"Count out thirty-two thousand dollars in greenbacks," the figure was saying to the croupier, who was gazing up at the hold-up form nonchalantly. "Quick!" it ordered sharply. "Careful how yo' handle that gun in the drawer! That's right! Now, get busy!"

"I'll see yo' in torment first!" cried Bethoud, lurching forward, but a gun swung around on him and he stopped.

"Don't!" was the brief warning.

The croupier counted out the bills warily as the figure's nimble fingers turned up each one as he dealt them out.

"That's enough," ordered the figure placidly, picking up the money and stuffing it inside of his shirt. Drawing the other revolver which he had tucked under his belt when he was counting the currency, he backed to the door with the warning: "You hombres keep a-clawin' an' coolin' yore heels for a spell." Then the door opened and closed upon the figure and he was gone.

For a few seconds there was silence, and then when the hoofbeats of a horse were heard galloping madly away, Jim Bethoud sprang towards the door yelling loudly:

"Double what he's stolen to the man that gets him!"

CHAPTER SIX

WHEN the figure shut the door of the Lucky Chance and stepped on the platform he sprang towards the rail where several horses were tethered. Dexterously he unhitched a likely-looking beast that snorted and pawed at his approach, led him from the group and with a sharp slap of his hand on the plunging animal's quarters he grinned beneath his mask to see it bolt for the open country. At the cry from within the saloon he ran around the corner of the building, nearly colliding with a crouching form in the darkness.

"The blamed snake took my horse!" vociferated a lean cowpuncher. Then the gang mounted and rode off after the riderless horse. The crouching form overheard the utterance, and he grinned, too.

An hour passed.

Quietness at last reigned in the Lucky Chance. The riderless horse had been overtaken, but all trace of the fugitive was lost. A great peace seemed to have descended upon the Eastern detective's mind as with sleepy eyes he stared through the semi-gloom of the room. Lying at his side and sleeping soundly was his prisoner—Paul Dimmock.

"God, what a man!" he muttered, glancing admiringly at the sleeping prisoner. "Wants no requittal, no nothing. But I'll find a way if I have to turn in my badge."

A glance at his watch showed Briggs that the time was nearly three o'clock. Night was passing swiftly. Already a thin gray streak tinged the blackness of the eastern horizon. The moon, far down behind a stately mountain,

was a pale, dying light in the centre of the star-dotted dome. As Briggs lay staring into space his line of vision focused on the lone window; he saw a flitting silhouette move across the opening, linger for an instant, then pass from view.

He was wide awake now and waiting intently for its reappearance. Grimly he watched and soon his vigilance was rewarded. This time the shadow stopped before the open window and there took definite shape. The detective's fingers were now closed over the butt of his automatic that was under his pillow, his other hand hovering near a dimmed oil lamp that set on a chair beside the bed. Tensely he watched the silent figure swing lightly into the room, and as he stood erect a glint of metal flashed in the gloom.

With cat-like tread the prowler moved furtively towards the bed, peered down at the still forms, then turned towards a closet that contained the clothes and baggage of the occupants. His singular movements were puzzling the detective, who imagined it was an attempt to liberate his prisoner. He stiffened and slowly drew his revolver from beneath his pillow as a new-born thought flashed into his mind.

"Impossible!" he meditated. "And then, again, it could be possible that—— No, that wasn't the prowler's motive." His fingers were now fumbling with the burner-key of the lamp on the chair, when the reason stunned him like a blow! With a quick twist of his fingers the lamp flooded the room.

"Hands up!" cried the detective as he threw himself from the bed to the floor, his automatic at ready.

With a snarl the intruder whirled, his gun spitting fire as he did. Briggs dropped to the floor, and from his prone position the blue automatic answered wickedly. The intruder's arms dropped to his side, his gun clattering to the floor. He looked straight at Briggs with a look of malevolence in his glassy eyes, then turned a glance of puzzled wonder at Dimmock, who was standing over the crouching officer. He then slowly went to his knees and lurched jerkingly forward, face down on the floor.

Briggs arose and bent over the body, turned it over and peered searchingly into his face. Then, tearing open his shirt, he bared the dead man's left shoulder. "I thought so!" he exclaimed, as he noted a long livid scar where a part of his collar-bone had been removed.

"Gus Stubbs, the dog!" put in Dimmock, who was looking down at the stark form at his feet.

"Stubbs nothing," corrected the detective. "That's Pug Jacobs, wanted for murder in New York. I thought it was him when I met him the other day in Silver Creek. I was the one that shattered that bone of his. That was in Providence; slugged a guy and nearly killed him. Gee, Dimmock, but he's a ringer for you!"

The sound of the shooting had aroused the household of the Lucky Chance. Hurried footsteps could be heard coming nearer as the booming voice of the owner, calling loudly for the sheriff through an open window, shattered the plate-gray stillness without. A reckless plan had now concentrated in the detective's mind as he stared at the dead murderer on the floor and then at Dimmck. The problem that his mental faculties had been wrestling with for the past hour and more, the solution was now clearly visible. It was coming to Dimmock, and he—Briggs—would then have paid his debt of gratitude.

Leaping into the open closet, the detective drew from his pants a roll of bills. Then springing to the bed, he threw aside the mattress and pulled forth a bundled-up plaid shirt, which he hastily unfolded, disclosing to view a pair of heavy revolvers. The shirt he put back, turned down the mattress over it again, smoothed over the covering, then turned to his prisoner, who was watching his strange behavior in wonderment.

"Here, Dimmock," Briggs was saying in an even tone to his perplexed charge, as the footsteps were nearing the door. From without voices heralded the approach of the sheriff and his deputy. "Take these and go; out that window with you!" he hissed, thrusting the guns and money into Dimmock's hands. "Don't say a word!" he went on in a sibilant whisper. "Think of her and the kid! It's your only chance, an' God knows I owe it to you! Don't worry about me; I've got a plan; if it fails, then—— Don't you see through the whole thing? Stubbs—the name you knew him by—

followed us from Silver Creek. See it now, don't you? The bank money! He musta been on the outside watching the whole transaction. He was too yellow to stick you up, an' knew Jim Bethoud's offer wasn't worth the breath he said it in. A bullet in the back would have been Bethoud's reward, as he and the sheriff are in cahoots—both crooks. Go now. Good-by."

Briggs smiled grimly as he strode to the door, where the voice of the sheriff was clamoring for admission amidst loud knocking. He squared his shoulders as he unlocked it and threw it open.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"YES, I admit that I was somewhat lame in not taking advantage of the security of your jail, sheriff," smiled Briggs a few minutes later. He was looking up into the stoical face of the officer, who, with the owner of the Lucky Chance, were looking down on the still form on the floor.

The sheriff grunted and then turned to his deputy.

"Get Breen, an' yo' an' him take this out," he ordered, pointing to the body.

"You say he was goin' fo' the window when yo' 'woke, an' he let go at yo' with his six-gun when yo' halted him?" questioned the sheriff, eyeing the Eastern sleuth through his bleary, slitted eyes. "Where'd he get the gun?"

"Well, you see, sheriff," still smiling, Briggs went on to explain, "when I took Dimmock in custody, Sheriff Willis of Silver Creek handed it over to me with a few of his other belongings. He must have got it out of my bag when I was out and hid it away. He was a mild guy, an' I took a chance that he would keep his word. You can never tell, can you, sheriff? Long experience like you've had 'ill teach me different."

The detective turned his head to hide the look of aversion in his eyes at his ironical inference.

"Yo're right, Briggs," the sheriff puffed out, "an' t'-night reminds me o' back in th' ol' days when I first got my star. A hold-up an' a killin'. By the way, Briggs, yo' never tol' me what yo' were bringin' that hombre back East for."

"Oh, him?" the detective laughed. "Oh, he—eh—he was wanted for bigamy. You see, sheriff, he married a half-dozen women, an' they're waiting back there to fight it out in court to find out which one will claim him when he'd done his stretch. About the hold-up, sheric; what was it?"

The sheriff threw his head back with a loud guffaw. Bethoud reluctantly joined in his merriment.

"The hold-up," he rejoined, still chuckling. "Some coyote stuck up the game to-night; some tinhorn that got cleaned out some time. The fool musta took religin maybe, cos he only took what he musta lost, when he coulda made a clean-up. Got away on a puncher's horse, turned him loose a few miles out, an' broke for the brush. But, say, Briggs, that pore hombre is shore lucky. Goshalmighty! To think of goin' back to face a lot of mad females! God, but he's lucky to be dead!"

The following day Chief Bullard received a telegram that read thus:

"I will arrive to-morrow on the Limited. Twenty-three thousand intact shipped to bank via Wells Fargo. Killed prisoner in attempt to escape. Have post-mortem from coroner to verify it.

(Signed) "BRIGGS."

"Huh," grunted the chief. "That'll save the county the expense of a trial and will boost Jack Briggs's stock up some with the commissioners."

His stern old face softened as he fingered the yellow sheet. He liked the young officer.

(The End)

Out In Our Next Number

A NEW SERIAL

Be sure to read the opening chapters of

"The Ring That Chattered"

By PETER PERRY

It is an exciting two-part detective story

THE Tragedy

by Katherine Stagg

CHAPTER ONE

RECENTLY the New York papers carried an account of a hold-up in New Jersey at a very lonely spot on the Erie Railroad.

Hold-ups are so frequent nowadays that it did not make any particular impression. But there is an inside story and a sequel that the public did not hear about at the time.

A newspaper account of it said:

"Two armed robbers fought a pistol battle with Jasper White, a railroad detective, early yesterday morning while attempting to rob a westbound freight train near Undercliff station. Young White was shot in the leg. The bandits escaped.

The train was due to pass Undercliff about two a. m.

When near the depot an airbrake hose was cut by the bandits and the train came to a standstill. Detective White was in the caboose. Drawing a revolver, he leaped from the train and crept forward in the shadow of the cars. The bandits evidently sighted the detective as he neared the car they were trying to ride and started shooting. White returned the fire until he fell. The bandits vanished."

With slight variations, this meagre account was all that appeared in any of the papers.

The railroads are not at all anxious to give publicity to such matters, and, compared to many of the more spectacular affairs constantly happening, it was soon lost sight of, save to the parties immediately concerned in it.

Jasper White, a boy who came to the city a few years ago, presented himself one morning at the offices of Clyde & Cleary, and calmly announced he had come there to learn the business of being a detective. The way he said it—each letter was a capital, and he evidently felt that it was a more thrilling ambition than to be President of the U. S. A.

He was so raw and countrified that every one laughed at him at first, but he somehow made a hit with Johnny Lewis, their best outside man, and, on a hunch, he gave Jasper a chance.

Owing to his having been a country boy, and his wide knowledge of New York and New Jersey, the boy was really a walking map. He had affiliated more or less with all sorts of railroad men, and had been assigned to the railroad job at the request of a railroad's private detective force.

There was nothing he loved so well as crawling over the cars, or peering from a cab

on long night rides through the usually silent country.

Jasper was a tall, rangy young chap, with a square jaw and a pair of bright dark eyes that were not hard and steely, but flashing and quick as a trigger—eyes that saw in the dark, seemingly—eyes that compelled, for all his youth.

There is a sharp curve and a very heavy grade just before one reaches Undercliff, and it is a dangerous spot.

Engines have a personality, and often develop cranky turns, as any engineer will tell you, and a variety of trifling mishaps had occurred in the cab that had caused some very lurid language and an hour's delay. They had been going at a sharp clip to make up this lost time when the hold-up came.

At the sound of the shots a couple of brakemen ran toward the spot. But it all happened in such a few seconds that the bandits were already out of sight in the thickly wooded ravine that overshadows a brawling brook at this point.

Jasper fired a last shot at the fleeing figures, more to relieve his feelings than in any hope it would strike them, but he was helpless as his leg doubled under him.

Willing hands started to lift him into the nearest passenger coach, but he shook them off.

"No, fellers; no hospital for me. The train is behind schedule anyhow, and you've got to make up lost time. I see a buzz wagon coming over the cliff, and I'll just do a little hold-up of my own, and git it to take me to the nearest doctor. These birds may have left some clew around here, and I'm on the job yet."

CHAPTER TWO

IN a big stucco house high above the station on a thickly wooded hill, two women were alone on the night of the hold-up.

It was the nearest house to the station, but could only be reached by several flights of wooden stairs up the side of the cliff. The village itself was fully half a mile away.

About one-thirty in the morning Mrs. Almira Duval, the owner of the stucco house, a handsome young widow of thirty, awoke and started screaming violently.

The cries aroused her friend, Ada Wylie, who was sleeping in the next room.

Not waiting for kimono or slippers, she rushed into the room of her hostess and found her sitting up in bed glaring at the window.

"One of my heart attacks. Quick, the medicine in the bottle on the shelf in the bathroom!" she gasped.

Ada pushed a button and turned on the light, hurriedly looking for the bottle. But she froze in her tracks as she distinctly heard stealthy footsteps on the veranda below.

There were several bottles in the cabinet, and, fearing to give the wrong dose, she picked up two that looked most probable, and went back to the bedroom to ask which was the correct medicine, as they both bore the number of a prescription.

With the two bottles in her hand she crossed to the bed, listening with all her might, hoping that Mrs. Duval had not heard the sounds, for she knew her heart was weak and a fright might prove fatal.

She inwardly cursed the servants who had left that very day, it being too lonely for their city-bred ideas.

As she approached the bed she saw that Mrs. Duval was in a dead faint, huddled back against the pillows, apparently lifeless. Whether from the heart attack, or whether she had heard those prowling feet and had fainted from fright, Ada could not even guess.

This was a pretty plight for a girl of twenty, slight and pretty in a delicate way, but utterly without harsh experience.

However, she was a daughter of the twentieth century, and the telephone at once came to her mind.

To her utter consternation she found there was no response to her call.

It took what seemed a long time to convince her that the wires had been cut, but when she realized that no click came she faintly gave it up and rushed back to the bedroom, where Mrs. Duval still lay with no sign of life.

She remembered that she had seen a decanter of brandy on a sideboard in the dining-room, so she listened for a moment, and then

descended the stairs, grabbed the decanter, and flew back to the fainting woman.

She forced a few drops of liquor between her teeth, and was rewarded in a moment by a slight flush and a flicker of life as the sick woman made an uneasy movement and gasped terribly to get her breath. But even that was better than nothing. Ada persisted in her efforts, and presently Mrs. Duval came to herself, but pushed the brandy away and again asked feebly for the medicine.

Ada showed her the two bottles, and she directed the dose to be given from the smaller one.

To her dismay Ada saw that but a small modicum of the mixture was in the bottle, and she knew enough about her friend's case to cause her grave apprehension unless she could have the required quantity at once.

Should she brave all and make a dash for the doctor?

She knew if she did not and Mrs. Duval died, it would haunt her for the rest of her life. Like many another she rose to the occasion when danger forced the issue, thrust her feet in shoes without stockings, buttoned a motor coat over her nightdress, gave the sick woman another spoonful of the brandy, and bolted for the garage.

As she crossed the lawn that lay between the house and the garage all seemed silent, and she hoped against hope that she had been mistaken in thinking some one beside herself was abroad in the darkness of the lonely place.

The stairs down the cliff led nearest to the village, for the road wound around for a mile or so to avoid the steepest part. It was no joke to negotiate it in the gloom of the overhanging tree, but she was a skilled motorist, and she felt that was the best way to bring the doctor back with her, and miles are nothing when gasoline can make one fly over them.

As she neared the railroad crossing she was forced to stop her car and wait for a freight train which was passing.

Suddenly it came to a crouching halt, and a perfect fusillade of shots rang out.

The motor that Jasper had spied had stopped on the upper side of the tracks, and it happened to be that side on which Jasper had fallen. Before the coated figure in the car could get the automobile started he gave a great yell and tried to crawl toward it, but the pain in his leg warned him that he had better go easy until he could get help.

Ada Wylie in the car gasped when she saw the figure lying on the right-of-way.

For a moment she thought of trying to turn her car and flee the spot, but it was a bad place to turn, and she felt, too, that it would be the act of a coward, so she automatically obeyed the voice of the man and edged the car as near as possible.

Voices mean a lot, and Ada presently felt a tiny spurt of returning confidence, for this voice was young, frank, and thrilling with zest in what to him appeared to be an adventure.

"That's right, old man; get her as close as you can and give me a hand up; we got to find a doctor somewhere around here. The guys peppered me a bit and put one of my legs out of gear, I think. It was a dandy fight while it lasted. There! That's as near as you can make it; now help to haul me up. But—— Gee! You're a girl!"

Jasper had been so busy trying to reach the car step that he had not looked up until the girl's hand was extended to assist him.

"Yes, I'm a girl!" was all she could say weakly.

"And a gosh-darned pretty girl, too, I'll tell the world."

Jasper chuckled.

CHAPTER THREE

"SAY, if it wouldn't be too inquisitive, may I ask where you are bound this time of night. It don't look exactly right for you to be out by your lonesome," said Jasper.

The girl hastily explained her predicament, and when the detective heard that she was on the way to get a doctor he felt that luck was with him.

"M-m! You say the physician is only a mile down the valley; then I think I better snuggle down here on this nice soft-stony avenue until you come back and the doc can take me in charge," he said.

"Oh, I wish I could lift you into the car, but I'm afraid I can't. You're a rather big

man," she returned; she had meant to say "boy," but somehow she felt that he was a power and a protection, even hurt; so she used the other word, much to Jasper's satisfaction.

"Yeh; six foot, and weigh a lot, too. But I'll be all right. You beat it down there, get the sawbones, and tell him to dress on the way. This is a very informal party," with a roguish glance at the girl's bare feet, which he had just spied.

Even in the dark he fancied he could see Ada's blush. She did not reply, but started her car and shot down over the tracks with a full sense of the importance of haste.

Jasper took a good swig from a flask in his pocket. Then as his eyes became more accustomed to the dim light, he began to search the adjacent ground. The radius that he could see was not far, but if the bandits had dropped anything, and he had a confused memory of hearing some slight sound, he knew it must be within a short distance of where he was lying.

Inch by inch he moved his powerful glance. Cinders, cinders, cinders. He mentally ruled off the yards until he noticed a scraggly bush near by. Two of the branches were broken off, and yes, down in the midst of the bush he could make out a square outline that might be a box or package. It wasn't cinders, and it wasn't stalks or leaves; it was some solid object a few inches long.

Now, could he get at in his helpless condition?

He tried to crawl toward it, but the pain in his useless leg warned him he couldn't make it, so he concentrated for a moment and lighted a cigarette to help the thought processes. That smoke of his would always stay in his memory, for surely a guiding spirit had taken care that he threw the match in another direction. After considering the matter he concluded not to mention the thing under the bush when the others came back. It was highly unlikely that any one would be by there again that night, and he rather wanted that mysterious square thing to fall into the hands of the police and no other, so he slipped off his coat, then his waistcoat. It landed neatly and lightly on the proper spot, and Jasper grinned to himself and at the success of his effect, for it was a bit worn and body-sweated on the inside. In fact, it looked just like some old worn rag as it covered the thing, whatever it might be. Jasper resumed his coat and heard the engine of a car coming.

"Down, but not out!" he muttered to himself.

The little car scooted up the road as though it knew how very important a part it was playing in the dramatization of this night's events.

As it skimmed the tracks on its return journey the girl steered it carefully as near Jasper as she could, and a burly man leaped out and cried:

"Luckily this young woman caught me just as I came back from one of my usual calls. We'll get you in the car, young man, and then run up to the house."

He talked as he acted, for his skillful arms made short work of aiding Jasper into the car.

"Right-o, doc; I don't think this little business of mine is more than a flesh wound, and it's jolly good of you to stop for me at all. I've been in a scrimmage on the train, and I'd like more than anything to get in touch with a phone. I suppose they have one at the house where you are going?"

"Of course, but the wire is cut. Anyhow, I couldn't get any answer when I tried," the girl replied.

"You didn't mention that before." Jasper whistled as if the fact bore some special import to his mind.

They wound up higher and higher through the trees until they came out in a clearing where the stucco house stood as a crown on the hilltop.

The ground was quite cleared of trees here, and it really was rather a wonderful sight, for the wide country rolled itself out in great billows of foliage, looking down over miles of tree-tops—the tall, pointing fingers of pines and cedars, the waving plumes of maples and elms, and the proud, umbrella-like tops of catalpas.

As the car came to a stop quite suddenly there blazed on the upper reach of "Old Baldy" mountain a double line of light crossing each other in a very rude design that might easily be assumed to be the cross-sections of an emblem that has been for centuries the object of worship.

Jasper was still boy enough to stare at the unexpected sight with unconcealed wonder.

"Gee! Pipe the fireworks!" he exclaimed. "What's the big idea?"

"Oh, can it be an outlaw signal, do you think? I heard they were up to things around here," Ada murmured with bated breath.

"Brush fires, more likely," answered the doctor, but he looked terribly grim for a moment.

Jasper remained in the car while the doctor followed the girl into the house and up to the bedroom of Mrs. Duval.

They found her bound by a twisted sheet in the bed, and a gag in her mouth had almost finished the poor woman, but the spark of life still burned, and a few minutes' work on the part of the doctor brought her back to consciousness.

She had muttered something incoherent about the window and a man, but the doctor would not let her talk, and she soon sank into a drug-imposed sleep.

As quickly as he dared to leave the patient the doctor came back to the car and rendered first aid to Jasper. It had seemed a long time coming, but fortunately the wound was not serious.

While the physician worked he asked some questions and seemed more than pleased to learn that Jasper was a detective. Then he remarked:

"It strikes me, young fellow, that there has been dirty work all around here to-night. I'd better take you down with me until the morning and then plant you in a hospital for a few days."

"Nothing doing, doc! Ain't got time for hospitals just now. Gosh down it, if it had only been my arm instead of my leg."

"Well, suppose it had been your head or your heart? Better be thankful the way it is, for, you know, that wound wasn't a mile away from the latter spot, so say your little prayers and be cheerful because you're still on earth, if that's a privilege."

"That's the talk. I get you, and I am grateful, you bet your sweet life. I, like everybody else, have had my own troubles, but I can't say I'd like to kick out, not just yet!"

The doctor had been working by the porch light, and he now switched it off and climbed into the car.

"I hate to leave that woman alone here, for I know very well some crook had been around. Most likely he has been scared away by this time, and she, of course, would not leave Mrs. Duval alone the second time, but she wants me to use her ear. I'll drive you down to my house and get a couple of nurses or some one, neighbors it probably will be, this hour of the night. I can bring them back, and then in the morning we will look over the damage and see what is to be done."

The doctor's words were those of good common sense, but Jasper groaned in spirit; to wait until morning when so many suspicious things fairly beckoned him to action was maddening.

"It seems the only thing to do," he admitted, "but, on the way down, would you stop just a minute right near where you picked me up? There's a certain queer-looking object that I think was dropped or thrown off the train down there, and I want a nearer once over for it than I could manage then."

"All right, boy, that sounds promising. Do you think the bandits did get away with something off the train and then had to drop it?"

"Don't know, but it's worth a look, anyhow."

"You say that you are a railroad detective, eh?"

"Yep, that is, just at present; they hired me for that."

"Do you know what was in that particular freight-car that might have been the object of the hold-up?"

Jasper thought quickly for a moment, put two and two together, and decided to be quite open with the doctor.

"There was mostly tobacco in that car, but it is not entirely without record for narcotics to be concealed in tobacco. That's my hunch, and you know, doc, that many thousands of dollars' worth of cocaine, etc., etc., can be hidden in a small space. It beats traffic in jewels since one Volstead stood the country on its head."

The doctor gave the boy a quizzical look as he started the car.

"All right, we'll have a glance at your idea of a token of value in these upside-down days we live in."

But, very luckily for them, they were just

about three minutes behind-time to see the mysterious small box.

So does providence or some hidden force protect us many a time in our action.

CHAPTER FOUR

"MY God! Look at that!" It was no wonder that Jasper had exclaimed at the sight. High against the shoulder of the mountain across the valley the lights they had noticed before blazed brilliantly and unmistakably in the form of a cross. It showed weirdly, for a great black cloud crowned the top of "Old Baldy," and made a magnificent background.

Jasper felt his nerves keyed up to a great tensity, even more than the actuality of the moment could warrant; then his roving eyes detected a movement in the clumps of shrubbery across the lawn, and, yes, it surely was a crouching figure advancing to the house on the farther side.

"Say, man, hold quiet for just a second! Make out you're fumbling with some of the gear, then go slowly down the road for about fifty feet."

Jasper's voice was a harsh whisper, but so fraught with command that the doctor obeyed without protest.

"An eye for an eye, yes, sir; go slow. That bird is up to mischief; now it's going to be a leg for a leg. Wow! That's it!" A shot rang out and the man fell, neatly pinked as Jasper coolly shoved his pistol in his pocket. "Lucky I had another bullet in the little gun. Eh?"

"Well, I'll be damned!" The doctor stopped the car. "What is this, anyhow?"

"I had to do it, doc. If I am not mistaken, that guy will be the key to the whole fireworks, and I had to have him. It's simply infernal for a detective to feel that the whole box of tricks are under his elbow and be tied in a wagon with a broken leg. But he is in my class now, and it will be who can pump the truth out, or who can stay shut, and I'm betting on myself if you won't think me a conceited pup."

"Do we pick up your friend and tote him along then?" asked the doctor.

But the question was never even heard, for just then the moon swept majestically from behind a cloud canopy and the whole valley was illuminated gloriously.

In the light, which was like a revelation, a great touring car was seen filled with men and tearing madly down the road near where it crossed the railroad at the station. From the top of the cliff they could look down and see this as if it were in the pit of some theatre.

"They are probably some of the railroad thieves!" the doctor hissed.

The scene held for a second, then the whole valley was rocked with a terrific explosion, so deafening a sound that no screams were loud enough to rise above it. Only when the smoke lifted the bandit car was not to be seen, merely a heap of wreckage. It began to burn and twist in writhing shapes in the light of the moon.

When the local police turned in their report several days later they stated that Detective Jasper White, though wounded himself, had extracted a confession from one Sam Brownell, whom he had shot.

He, with two confederate bandits, had planned to rob the freight-car of several packages of tobacco, in which narcotics had been hidden, and meant to take said packages up to the Duval house and conceal them there.

A bomb had been placed in the train. They had intended it to explode after they had made their escape, thus obliterating all trace of the robbery. It was a neat plan, but went wrong by reason of the presence of Detective Jasper White, a fact which they had not reckoned on. He had given them such a game fight that the bomb had been kicked off in mistake for one of the packages of tobacco, and it landed in the bushes and was covered by Jasper's vest. The time-clock later exploded it.

Brownell was yellow enough to give information by which the other two bandits were traced and captured. Justice claimed its own on the score, but the whole countryside was shaken by the tragedy of the death of the ten men in the motor.

Technically and legally it was what is called "an act of God."

Cocoanuts Are Hard to Produce

AS many planters know to their cost, few trees have more enemies than the cocoanut, or, as some call it, the cocoanut, on the products of which so many millions of the white and colored races depend.

Monkeys and wild elephants rob the plantations and work great damage. The monkeys, with almost human intelligence, place sentinels to give the alarm of danger and form long lines or queues to hand along the fruits or nuts, that are disposed of with astonishing quickness. The elephants are so fond of the young tender leaves that often it is necessary to guard the trees by lighting fires and firing guns during the night.

Wild hogs and porcupines also eat the roots of the invaluable palms. They do immense hurt to the trees, like the Malay bear, or coco bear, that is so ravenous of the tender leaves. The shaggy little animal, which climbs the palm very nimbly, seldom attacks the natives of the Malay Peninsula. Indeed, it is said that the coco bear, instead of attacking the women and children it meets astray in the jungle, has on several occasions found them food and helped them.

Insects certainly effect havoc on the coco tree and its fruit, but animals are the chief foes of the coco planter, both in the Pacific and Indian islands. One queer enemy is the so-called marten of the palm trees—a strange animal that climbs the coco and drinks the milk in the nuts. The marten is about nineteen inches long, and is as thick in the body as the average cat. It is found in Java and in southern Asia, and is one of the most fearless and ferocious fighters. Its head and teeth are like a wildcat's.

Every season this very odd-looking animal spoils countless cocoanuts. In Java the natives declare it does this out of sheer hatred to human beings, whom the marten of the palm tree attacks with even less hesitation than the most savage weasel.

Frequently the palm squirrel is to be seen frisking on the trees on the East Indian shores. When it can, this squirrel makes use of the holes gnawed in the green nuts by the marten to drink what is left of the milk. Yet it also can tap the nuts and sip its fill of their delicious fluid.

Many are the enemies of the coco palm and its nut; and among the worst are birds. Beautiful and interesting it is to see the parrots climbing and chattering, all gorgeous in their plumage and sucking the pollen of the splendid golden flowers that rise above the green leaves of the coco palms; they and the macaws destroy the fertility of many, many cocoanut trees. However, they are not as destructive as a kind of sea swallow—the black noddy. It builds its nest among the stalks of the leaves, and when stormy weather prevents it from flying out to sea it passes its time pecking the flowers of the palm, and in this way causes at times a very poor yield of nuts on certain of the East Indian islands.

Insects also prey on the coco palm. The termites, or white ants, build their nests on the tops of the trees and kill them from their crowns, and the species that find a home at their base roots poison them. Among many others, the rhinoceros beetle, that is very like a miniature model of the unicorn rhinoceros, cuts his way into the leaves and eats the topmost sprout, while his wife bores holes in the trunk to lay her eggs in it and kill the tree.

The Greater Duty

by Bayard Yadon

ALLEN CARTER rested himself on the park bench and began rather reluctantly to plan for the future. During the past three years he had done little useful thinking, for his menial work at the state penitentiary had required more brawn than brains.

Previous to his involuntary induction into the aforesaid penal institution he had for several years earned his living by writing. Not being of a literary turn of mind, his propensity to write had manifested itself in the form of signing wealthy men's names to small blue strips of paper. This pleasant and profitable pastime ended abruptly soon after Alvin Steele, of a local detective agency, became interested. This sudden cessation of his lucrative exhibits of chirographic skill was followed by his removal to an abode where striped suits are ever in style.

He took a folded piece of paper from an inside coat pocket, unfolded it, and regarded it thoughtfully. The magic words printed in script thereon held him enthralled.

"This certifies that the bearer is the owner of ten shares in the Blue Diamond Oil Company" was the inscription that fed his imagination and seemed to form a sort of gang-plank to success.

Immediately after his exit from prison he had gone to "Big Tim" Smith, a member of the light-fingered fraternity, and demanded the hundred dollars that the latter had agreed to hold in trust for him until his release and return. "Big Tim" had failed to "cough up" the dough, but had given Carter the stock certificate, which he accepted in full payment. This elaborately engraved paper, with the gold seal at the bottom, represented Carter's entire worldly capital.

Conscious of the fact that a resumption of his former check-writing activities would eventually lead him back to a felon's cell, he intended to go straight. Intelligent, well-educated, handsome, he could doubtless find honest employment until his dividends from the Blue Diamond began to pour in.

Taking from his pocket a copy of the morning *World*, he turned to the "Help Wanted" page.

While idly turning the pages a glaring headline claimed his attention:

"Thousands stung by Wild-Cat Oil Stock."

Below was an account of the recent activities of spurious oil-stock promoters. Ninety-nine per cent. of the stock not being sold would never pay one cent of revenue to the holders, according to the news writer.

Allen Carter was stunned. All his hopes of a bright future had tumbled down. He thought of handing the worthless bit of paper back to "Big Tim" and demanding his money, but finally decided that he would take his medicine like a man. The thought that he had been humbugged, swindled, out-talked, hurt him more than the loss of the money.

Then an idea burrowed its way into his brain. Other men were becoming rich by selling worthless oil stocks, why not he? It was all perfectly legal until the investors raised a howl, and by that time he could withdraw from the game. Noting the address of the main office of the Blue Diamond Company, he decided to write for agency terms.

One month later Allen Carter found himself seated behind a flat-top deck in a well-furnished office. The large gold letters on the door spelled his own name and the smaller words underneath indicated that he was the local agent for the Blue Diamond Company.

The business was advertised in a manner that was well calculated to "take in" those who are fascinated by an element of chance in an investment. According to newspaper advertisement and circulars which the company sent out the Blue Diamond was drilling several wells, and was daily expecting to find oil. On the discovery of oil the shares would of course leap from ten to one hundred dollars each. Carter usually sold several hundred dollars worth of stock each day. The greater part of this was sold to impecunious working people to whom the temptation of sudden wealth was irresistible.

"It seems to me that a thorough overhauling of the laws of the country would not be out of order," mused Carter; "three years ago I, wrote an autocrat's name to a check for fifty dollars and got three years in hell for it; now I take ten times that amount daily from poor ignorant laborers and become a respected member of society."

There came a day, however, when his conscience rebelled. The cause for this sudden change of mind, this awakening of remorse, was the same that has ever worked miracles in the heart of man—a woman. As if trying to expiate the sins of their mother Eve, the "female of the species" seems ever the agency that plucks a man from the downward road and gently places him on the straight and narrow.

To the casual observer she was only an ordinary woman. The average cabaret habitué would not have looked at her a second time. Bobbed hair and rouged cheeks were as foreign to her as home-brew is to W. J. B. She was dressed in a plain blue serge skirt and white waist. A cheap hat that had been in style a month earlier strived to conceal the dark mass of hair under which her ears were plainly visible. Her eyes were pools of dark liquid which shone with both intelligence and trustfulness. The Blue Diamond man knew, before she had uttered a word, that she was from the country.

She glanced timidly around the room before entering.

"Come right in, miss," exclaimed Carter, affably.

"I wish to see about buying some oil stock. Are you Mr. Carter?" Her voice was singularly calm and well-modulated.

Assuring her that he was the gentleman that she wished to see, Carter told her about the excellent chances of fabulous wealth to the investors in Blue Diamond stock.

"You see, my father died a short time ago and left me without much means of subsistence. I came to the city yesterday and obtained employment at a department store. I have one hundred dollars to invest with you. My friends in the country advised me to take a business course, but I saw your advertisement in the paper and decided to investigate. If it is as you say, this money should make me a thousand dollars within a few weeks." She finished with a smile.

That smile was Carter's undoing. A strange blending of hope, trust and innocence, it seemed to go to the very heart of the ex-convict and to fill him with a strange sense of shame and exhilaration. To what depths had he fallen? Trying to cheat a poor fatherless country girl out of her last penny! This would never do.

"Listen, Miss—er——" he began.

"Edna Hopkins," she assisted.

"Miss Hopkins, you know this investment is—well, rather uncertain. Perhaps you had better not put all your money into it."

"But I insist on putting it all in the stock.

I have faith in it, and from what you said a few minutes ago I am sure that they will soon strike oil."

How could he convince her that it was all a fake? He could not very well tell the girl that, so far as he knew, they were not even drilling for oil.

"It is all right as a chance investment, of course, if you can afford it, but I'm afraid you can't. Living expenses in the city will doubtless be more than you expect. I would not like to think that I was the cause of any inconvenience to you."

But she was obstinate and would not be satisfied until she had exchanged her money for the engraved, gilt-edge certificate.

Soon she was gone and Carter's peace of mind went with her. The man who, an hour ago, had been the smooth, smiling light-hearted man of crooked business now seemed more like a conscience-stricken criminal. He was not perverted by nature. Reared by respectable country parents, he had simply fallen into evil habits. While in prison Carter had firmly resolved to become honest after his release, and would have done so but for the dubious stock that had been palmed off on him. Now, he told himself, he would retire from the business at the first opportunity.

He took the ten ten-dollar bills that the girl had exchanged for the stock and carefully smoothed them out. Putting them into an unused drawer of his desk, he decided to pay for her certificates out of his own money. When the inevitable crash came he could at least make one heart glad.

As if the girl were the beginning of his mental disturbances, business now began to look threatening for him. Investors daily thronged the office to ask information regarding the oil wells upon which they had staked their hard-earned money. Some were threatening and hinted darkly of jails, shootings or manhandling. He knew instinctively that detectives had him spotted. Raids and captures of "wild-cat" oil promoters were of almost daily occurrence and Carter felt that it was only a question of time until he was exposed.

Arthur Brown and Marie DePree, both operatives of Steele's agency, were the detectives who had caused most of the exposures and arrests. That Brown at least was on his trail Carter had no doubt. He was almost certain that he was being shadowed by a middle-aged man with a dark mustache and keen black eyes. He saw the fellow almost every time he went out on the streets. At restaurants, theaters and other public places he met him. Once the stranger had attempted to speak, but Carter dodged him in the crowd. The idea that the man was a detective became a certainty when Carter heard him addressed by another man as "Mr. Brown."

Two weeks had passed since Miss Hopkins's visit, and Carter had not seen her again. In his excitement and sudden change of feeling he had failed to obtain her address while she was at his office. He visited all the department stores, but found no trace of her.

He had come to the conclusion that he would never see her any more when one morning she walked into his office. This time she was smartly dressed, and had an air that was distinctly urban. Carter quickly sprang to his feet and unconventionally clasped her hand.

"I'm so glad you've come!" he exclaimed. "I've looked everywhere for you."

"Why?" she asked innocently.

"Well, you see——" he paused. He couldn't very well tell her that he had fallen in love with her, that he thought of her continually. "You didn't leave your address when you bought the stock. You know it is necessary that we have the addresses of all the investors," he finished.

"So you can mail them checks when you strike oil, I suppose?" There was a tinge of irony in her tone.

"Yes, or notify our customers that we have struck water. You had better allow me to give you your money back. You might lose it."

"But what about the hundreds of others? I am no better than they, am I?" she asked calmly.

He wanted to tell her that she was all the world to him. But it wouldn't do. What right had he, an ex-convict, a human vulture who preyed on widows and orphans, to make love to this pure and innocent girl? He was silent.

"I have called to see if you have any favor-

able news from the oil wells," she said after an awkward pause.

"They say they are expecting to strike oil at any time," he answered weakly.

"Do you believe it?" She looked straight into his eyes as she spoke. He could not lie to *her;* he could not even make an evasive answer.

"No," he answered, "I don't believe that the investors will ever get a cent out of their stock."

"And yet you continue to sell it. Why do you?"

"How can I help it now? New investors crowd this office every day. I tell them they are taking a big chance, but this only makes them more determined. If I quit the business and close up the investors will raise a howl and cause my arrest. There is nothing to do except to stick it out and take my punishment like a man when the crash comes."

"I believe you," she said gently. "I don't believe that you intended to defraud any one originally."

"Oh, I *did* intend to defraud them all until I met *you.* After that, somehow——"

She interrupted him, saying:

"Please don't talk like that. Remember, we are little more than strangers. If I have in any way helped you I am glad of it." She prepared to depart.

"Please don't go," he pleaded. "I like to talk to you."

"I must," she insisted. "I will call again some time and inquire about the oil wells."

"You must give me your address——" he began, but she was already gone.

A few days later Carter received a telegram, the wording of which was:

"Expecting to strike oil. Sell only to old stockholders. Are sending them circulars.

"B. D."

"Old stuff," he muttered; "they all do that at the last moment to get in more money from the old investors."

In all the other companies he knew of such statements were published just before the bottom fell out of the deal. It was a plan well calculated to finish bleeding those who already had stock.

A few days later there was a grand rush of investors for more stock. Nearly all had managed to raise money with which to purchase additional shares. A widow, the mother of five children, had sold her little home at a sacrifice and invested the entire amount in Blue Diamond certificates. Carter strongly advised her against this step, but she, mistaking his motive, heeded not the warning.

Carter made a handsome commission on each share sold. During the few weeks that he had been in the business he had saved several thousands of dollars. Partly to ease his conscience and to let the company get back all the money he had made by their business, he invested the whole of this amount in Blue Diamond Stock.

One afternoon, while he was counting up the receipts of the day, he received a distinct shock. The door opened suddenly and the middle-aged gentleman with the dark mustache and the keen black eyes entered the office. Carter rose to his feet as he recognized the man who had been following him, and whom he had heard addressed as "Mr. Brown."

"Mr. Carter?" the unwelcome visitor inquired, genially.

"Yes, and you are Mr. Brown, I suppose," Carter said, calmly as he could.

"Oh, yes, I see you know me. I have had my eye on you for some time. Thought you would dodge me, did you?" he laughed, good-naturedly.

"Well, I admit the idea was not altogether displeasing to me." Perhaps it would be better to be as agreeable as possible. Brown seemed to be a pleasant sort of chap.

"We might as well get down to business," Brown began, putting his right hand into his side coat pocket. Carter had his hands halfway up when he saw that the object which the other brought forth from his pocket was not a gun, but a book.

"I am a book agent," Brown continued. "I am sure that you will be interested in a set of books on salesmanship. I see you are an oil stock salesman, and you could not invest——"

"You are a book agent!" Carter exclaimed. "I thought you were a—well—I didn't know."

The other continued his well-learned phrases, extolling the merits of his books.

Carter stopped him abruptly by saying that he would take the set.

After the agent departed Carter indulged in a hearty laugh.

"That's a good one on me," he said to himself; "too bad I can't tell it to my friends."

The next morning, while he was reading his morning mail and telegrams, Miss Hopkins entered hurriedly. He laid an unread message on the desk and asked:

"What's the matter, Miss Hopkins, you seem all excited."

"You must hurry away! They are coming to arrest you. Better go down the fire-escape!"

"Who? How do you know?"

"I overheard some detectives planning the raid. Alvin Steele is in charge of them."

Alvin Steele! The man who had sent him up for forgery three years ago! He would stand no chance if he were captured. But he decided to stay.

"Listen, Edna, little girl," he said gently, "I am not going to run. I am a bad man, I know, but I am not a coward. I am an ex-convict, a jail-bird, a 'wild-cat' oil stock promoter, but as soon as I get out of this trouble I am going straight in earnest. I may not get another chance to talk to you, so I will tell you what's on my mind now. You have changed my while life. You have made a new man of me. I love you!"

Hearing this, she sat down and, leaning her head on the desk, wept.

"Oh, if you only knew what I am, and what I have done," she wailed.

"Who are you and what have you done?" he asked wonderingly.

"I am Marie DePree. I am a detective and to think I got you into this trouble. But I will do all I can to get you out of it, for I—I—I love you," she stammered.

Carter put his arm around her.

"Don't cry," he said gently; "you had to do your duty. I don't think less of you for it."

"Yes, I have done my duty. I have known all the time that you were a good man at heart. How I hated to spy on you! But it will soon be over; let's go while there is yet time!"

"No, Edna. You have made a man of me. Now don't *un*make me."

There was a sound of tramping feet in the hall. The door was pushed violently open and Alvin Steele and two plain-clothes men entered. On seeing Miss DePree, Steele exclaimed:

"So you have kept him here until I came? Good! Allen Carter, you may come with me and tell the judge about this fake oil stock."

Carter's eyes had fallen on the unread telegram on the desk, and its contents startled him.

"Read them, Mr. Steele," he said triumphantly, handing the telegram to the detective.

Steele read aloud:

"Have struck oil in two wells. Don't sell any more stock. B. D. Oil Co."

"You win, Carter. Congratulations," the detective exclaimed heartily as he held out his hand.

"I have won more than you think," said Carter, putting his arms around Edna.

RED SNOW IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

LAST summer red snow made its appearance in the Rocky Mountain National Park, to the wonder of tourists. The great masses of color present in the snow fields of the higher elevations, says the Scientific American, are due to billions of tiny organisms, half plant, half animal, that have the power of movement, growth and reproduction.

The organism is an Arctic species known as Protococcus nivalis, and it has been found in Glacier and Mount Rainier National Parks only within the past decade. The color reaches its maximum density about a quarter of an inch below the surface of the snow; on the tongue its flavor suggests watermelon. It is a mystery how the spore traversed such great distances, but it is supposed to have traveled on the Chinook winds.

The Legend of the Mound

By HORACE APPLETON

THEORIZING as to the origin, attributes and surroundings of the mound builders will probably never cease.

The valleys of the Mississippi and tributaries are literally dotted with the remains of the work of this prehistoric race or races, and furnish material for untold centuries of research and speculation, let alone the richer fields of Mexico and Central America.

The mounds and tumuli which are left as the relics of these ancient inhabitants are of various forms and sizes, and no doubt subserved a variety of purposes.

Hundreds of them are now plowed over by the agriculturists of the valleys, and from their top to the luxuriant tasseled corn or clustering heads of ripening wheat are kissed by every passing breeze.

A short time ago, within an area of a few acres, I counted twenty of these tumuli.

One of them, on being dug into, revealed nothing but varied strata of earth, with a few ashes, charred embers, flints, etc., at the bottom, giving the impression that it had originally been but a sod or earthen house of some character, used for habitation, and the unceasing labor of the elements for centuries had reduced it to a small mound.

Others contain the skeletons, with all their implements, works of art, husbandry and war tools, which had been honorably buried with them, agreeably to some form of superstition which supposed the owner could take them with him to the future land.

Some of these mounds contain the bones of a race in nearly every way analogous to the Indians of to-day, while others show the bones and works of a much higher type of humanity.

The large mounds are much more varied and uncertain in character than the small ones.

Among the Iowa hills, not many miles from Keokuk, is a very large mound which is commonly taken for a point of bluff; but to the careful observer it is too evidently an artificial work to for a moment deceive.

Its structure and departure from the regular line of bluff formation point as plainly as words to the facts in the case.

The Indians that formerly roamed the hills avoided the spot, and termed the mound "Laenewac," meaning a judgment place.

The legend runs—

A great many years ago a powerful prophet, by the name of Muscotah, dwelt among the tribes of the Illinois side of the river.

At the same time there grew up in one of the tribes a very beautiful maiden—more beautiful than had ever greeted mortal gaze before.

Her face and form were perfect, and her voice as the laugh of silvery bells.

The Indians became wild over her, and wooers came from far and near.

Savage jealousy ran rife, and death reared its hideous head above many a ghastly mêlée.

Among the most determined and assiduous wooers was a powerful chief from the Iowa side of the river named Kakwah, but more commonly known as the Slayer, from his wanton destruction of life at the least provocation, and from his great prowess and fiendishness.

By his ability, and the arts known to savage warfare, he had extended his dominion, and become the most powerful chief of the country.

He sought the maiden, whose name was Mantolee, with much force and violence, intimidated her relatives and all around him, killed off some of his most important rivals, sang of his great deeds and prowess to her, and swore horrible things if she would not sanction his suit.

But just as all things seemed in his power, and fear had seemingly given him control, a

rival stepped in, with whom he found it difficult to cope.

The Prophet Muscotah sought Mantolee, and in tender, passionate tones urged her to become a prophetess.

Kakwah raved and raged, but he could not fail to notice that the love and veneration which the people held for the prophet exceeded the fear they entertained for him.

He tried to provoke the prophet to single combat, but Muscotah smiled disdainfully and waved him away.

Then he sought to waylay him, but the prophet was always awake, and friends were ever ready to warn and guard him.

If Kakwah had been on his own side of the river he would have stopped at nothing; but in a country which universally acknowledged allegiance to the prophet, and being without allies, he could not but feel the weakness of his position.

But it was with loud-threatened vengeance that he saw his rival's suit indorsed.

Muscotah took his fair bride, Mantolee, to his cave in the hills, and his tribes rejoiced that so worthy a prophet had found so beautiful a prophetess.

But not long was the rejoicing continued, for Kakwah and a band of warriors had been hiding near the cave, and at an auspicious time stole the fair bride and escaped to the Iowa side of the river.

For several years one or two bands of warriors were continually lurking near the village of Kakwah, watching for an opportunity to recapture Mantolee, but her wily captor was too cunning, and kept her in close confinement, which, together with harsh treatment, broke the heart of the once vivacious maiden, and Muscotah gave up the chase, knowing that she who had been his bride was no more.

"There is nothing for me to live for now," said the phophet wearily. "I will go to the land of my fathers, and join the Mountain Rose (Mantolee) in the happy hunting-grounds. But I will come back with the power of the Great Spirit, and Kakwah shall feel the force of my vengeance. I will wreak revenge on the dog of a slayer, and then I will dwell with Mantolee for evermore!"

After visiting all the tribes, and giving them advice and instructions for their future guidance, Muscotah gathered together his charms and implements that he desired buried with him and quietly breathed his last.

Shortly after this strange rumors began to circulate in Kakwah's village.

A hill near the town was enveloped in cloud all day, and at night the spirits of Muscotah and Mantolee could be seen in a bright flame.

Kakwah trembled when he heard these whispers, and after hearing them repeated for several nights concluded to watch and see for himself.

It was well advanced in the night, and Kakwah was pacing recklessly up and down a short distance from the village, and ever and anon looking towards the hill.

He had seen nothing strange, save once or twice he thought he saw a strange blue light and great commotion at its top.

Suddenly a strange, uncontrollable desire to slumber came over him.

He could not shake it off, but standing erect his eyes closed, and he knew no more till he opened them in a strange place.

Gazing around, he saw he was in a great funnel-shaped apartment, with numerous spirit forms around him.

One of them carried a great torch, which lighted up the place.

There were only two faces present that he recognized, and these were standing a short distance off and looking at him.

They were the spirits of Muscotah and Mantolee.

When Kakwah beheld these two his fear was complete.

He could not speak, but shook violently, while his eyes seemed starting from their sockets.

"This is to be the grave of yourself and followers," said Muscotah, in deep, hollow tones.

Kakwah's teeth chattered more violently than before.

"Here," said Muscotah, advancing to a hollow in the centre, "is a place fixed for you We have lined it with thorns and sharp rocks and have a sharp-edged rock to lay your head over. You shall sleep on such a bed through all eternity."

Kakwah could shake no worse.

Every bone in his body was rattling.

Muscotah advanced to his side and held something under his eyes, at the same time uttering a single word.

It was a virus he held in his hand.

Kakwah tried to speak, but he was shaking so violently that he could not articulate a word.

Muscotah took a knife and cut a gash along the slayer's arm and touched the wound with the virus, while Kakwah stood shaking and staring at the proceedings, unable to resist or say a word.

"Now," said Muscotah, "go back to your followers and tell them what you have seen. If you tell them you have the leprosy, they will all avoid you and leave you; and if you do not tell them, they will all catch it from you."

And at a wave of his hand the other spirits seized the chief and took him up through the opening at the top and set him down outside.

He now perceived that he was on the very hill that he had been watching the evening before, and as soon as he sufficiently recovered to be able to stand he hastened away from the dread spot.

The leprosy soon broke out and swept like an avalanche through the village.

Each night Muscotah would lead a crowd of spirits, says the legend, and go around gathering up the dead and taking them to the place prepared for them.

When the last man that aided in the abduction of Mantolee had paid the terrible penalty, he was placed with the rest, the opening closed, and Lacnewac Mound was complete.

WHAT MAKES THE SKY BLUE

THE investigations of a French scientist incline him to the old theory that the blueness of the sky is due to the color of the atmospheric oxygen instead of to suspended dust as most authorities have held since Tyndall's celebrated experiments on the subject. The Frenchman has detailed his reasons in an interesting way.

He classifies the explanation hitherto offered into two divisions: The physical type, based chiefly on the experiments of Tyndall on the ilumination of vapors; and the chemical type, more rarely advanced, founded on the intrinsic color of the components of the atmosphere. The Frenchman criticizes the experiments on which the physical theory is based and which are supported by a remarkable mathematical analysis by Rayleigh of the reflection of light from particles in turbid mediums. Such a medium may reflect an unusual proportion of waves of short lengths, so that it will appear reddish by transmitted light and bluish by reflected light. Besides this the plane of polarization in such a medium is situated as Tyndall's experiments indicate.

Now the Frenchman, by absorbing the blue rays of the sky, has, it appears, demonstrated that the polarization of the sky's light is not a sufficient proof of the optical origin of the blue, since he shows that other rays are also polarized. Rayleigh's theory would rather lead us to expect a violet color for the sky, which experiments with a long tube confirm. Besides, the dust of all kinds that renders the atmosphere turbid does not rise higher than 1,000 to 2,000 miles, and the weight and electric state of the air make it impossible for its particles to remain at rest and hastens their combination into flakes.

Are the solar rays, then, reflected by the gaseous molecules themselves? Here enter the observations of Soret, which prove that this hypothesis has no foundation, neither in the case of liquids nor in that of solids. The Frenchman first mentioned has also shown its falsity for gases.

Finally, in the case of the atmosphere, the Frenchman explains, relying on a calculation based on the properties of oxygen in the liquid state, the amount of this gas contained in the air, without counting the ozone and other bodies, will suffice to give the medium a sufficiently intense blue coloration to explain the appearances that are observed at different heights in the celestial vault. The variations of intensity in the blue and its thinning out in certain directions would be due to the dust which was formerly thought capable of causing its color. The sky is really more blue where there is less dust in the direction of the visual ray.

The Lavender Toque

by Edward F. Medosch

TALBOT SUCHET began examining the victim with the utmost care. The long lean body of the man was stretched out awkwardly in the huge morris-chair, the face was hideously contorted, as though he had undergone a fearful struggle before he died, and the hands were tightly clenched and lay in his lap.

Suchet knew that Inspector Browning, as well as Mrs. Sterling and the half-dozen or so other occupants of the spacious library, were watching his every movement. But Suchet never allowed himself to be hurried nor did his long, mottled face ever betray the least sign of excitement. The official force had called him in to help solve the mystery of Roger Sterling's death, and now that he was here he would handle things in his own way.

Suddenly he stood erect and held up something between his thumb and forefinger.

"Had you noticed these hairs, Inspector?" he asked.

"Yes," Browning returned. "I left them, as I thought you might be interested. Still, it's practically worthless as a clue. We've never been able to trace down any one by the hair of their head."

"This was clutched tightly in the dead man's fingers," Talbot mused. "He evidently had a sharp struggle with the murderer before the latter got away. I am going to keep these."

Browning gazed quizzically at him with his piercing black eyes. His hands were in his pockets and his left knee wiggled back and forth, as was his wont, but he said nothing.

Mrs. Sterling, a small woman in pink, was standing near the body of her husband, with an air of utter dejection upon her heavily rouged face, which, however, still retained traces of a rare beauty. At the other side of the heavy mahogany table were grouped three persons—a maid, the cook and the chauffeur, while the coroner and the family physician conversed in whispers at the other end of the room. Near the door leading into the hall stood an officer on guard.

Suchet now made a thorough investigation of the entire room, stopping at length before the table, upon which a toque of deep lavender lay. He lifted it to his nose and sniffed. A sickening, sweetish odor emanated from the hat. It was the odor of chloroform.

The criminal investigator's eyes strayed from the object in his hand to the little lady in pink. Her face was almost bloodless and her body shook.

"Is this your toque, Mrs. Sterling?" he questioned.

"Yes," she replied; "but how it got down

here and with that detestable smell on it God only knows!"

"Where do you keep it usually?"

"In my bedroom, of course."

"Now, Mrs. Sterling, I would like you to tell me as briefly as possible how and when your husband was found here and anything else in importance in connection with this affair."

Mrs. Sterling raised her hand halfway to her face, then dropped it.

"There isn't much to tell," she began. "I went out this afternoon—no, yesterday afternoon, I should say; it's past midnight now—and returned about five. At ten o'clock I retired, leaving my husband reading here in the library. I awoke about eleven and discovered that Roger had not yet gone to bed. This was rather unusual, so I came downstairs and found him in that morris-chair just as you see him now. I called to him and shook him and then that dreadful expression on his face frightened me and I screamed. Jennie Crosby, my maid, was the first to come into the room. I realized instantly what was wrong and then aroused the other servants. I don't know who called up the police."

"You don't, eh!" Suchet glanced sharply from one face to another. "Who did?"

No one spoke.

"It was a man's voice that called up headquarters," the Inspector put in.

Simultaneous with his declarations the doorbell rang.

Suchet's brown eyes swept the face of the clock. It was twenty minutes past twelve. Then he turned toward the officer at the door.

"Will you kindly answer that ring? And whoever it is, bring him or her into this room!"

The officer departed on his errand while the rest stood tensed, awaiting the appearance of this nocturnal visitor. In a few minutes the officer returned and stepped to one side of the doorway, allowing the newcomer to enter. All eyes were focussed upon the individual who now stood before them.

He was a tall, yellow-spectacled, eccentric-looking personage, with a lock of graying hair hanging down his forehead and a pair of outstanding ears that seemed to wiggle at will.

"Pardon the intrusion, gentlemen," he spoke in a hoarse voice. "My name is James Costigan and I am the next-door neighbor on the south."

"Well, what do you want?" Inspector Browning demanded in his characteristic brusque fashion.

Talbot Suchet shot a swift glance from Costigan's face to that of Mrs. Sterling and he noted a look of intense surprise, not unmixed with perplexity, cross her features.

"I don't want anything," Costigan replied. "I'm here to give you some information, unless you've already solved the mystery of Roger Sterling's sudden demise."

"What do you know?" Browning barked at him. "If you have any knowledge of this affair it's your duty to aid the law in hunting down the perpetrator of this deed."

"Take it easy, old man!" Costigan glared at his interrogator. "I didn't come here to be cross-examined. I came here to tell you something. Are you goin' to shut up and listen?"

The Inspector growled something but held himself in check.

"Let us hear what you have to say," Suchet interposed in his mild, almost effeminate, tone.

"Well, to begin at the beginning, my house next-door is some fifty feet away, but I have a pretty clear view from my bedroom window of this side of the Sterling house, particularly the room we are now in. Well, about half-past ten last night I happened to look out of my window and I saw something over here that made me look closer."

He paused and glanced curiously at Mrs. Sterling and the maid.

"Go on!" Suchet urged.

"Well! I saw that girl there"—pointing at Miss Crosby—"and Mr. Sterling engaged in a severe struggle. Mr. Sterling had her by the hair and then I saw her take something and squeeze it over his face until he relinquished his hold. She held it there until he sank down into a chair before she removed it. The object she held in her hands was the lavender toque you see upon that table. Then she fled from the room, but the man never stirred."

Suchet eyed the speaker with that staring insistency that challenged the truth of his statement, word for word. But Costigan stared straight back with all the candor of a

schoolboy. Apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, Suchet now turned his attention to the maid. Her face was blanched, as were her lips, and she glared at Costigan as a wildcat at its tormentor.

"Miss Crosby," Talbot spoke in a gentle voice, "what have you to say to this charge?"

The girl did not look at him but continued to glare at her accuser; then suddenly burst into a fit of passionate weeping and sobbed out:

"I didn't mean to kill him, I didn't! We were struggling together and he was getting the best of me when I pushed that hat down over his face and smothered him. Oh God! I didn't mean to kill him!"

The features of Mrs. Sterling were hardly less white as she turned a horrified face toward the speaker.

"And what was the cause of your altercation with Mr. Sterling?"

The girl continued sobbing while Suchet waited for her answer. Finally she spoke:

"Mr. Sterling tried to take from me a letter which he had written to me before I took service here. It was a love letter. Mr. Sterling was crazy about me and made love to me whenever he had the opportunity."

"Indeed!" The ejaculation escaped the lips of the outraged wife.

"I knew it was wrong to respond to his advances," the maid continued, "but at first I was very much in love with him and did not stop to consider what a scandal it was. After a time I grew tired of his attentions and advised him to make love to his wife instead. He would not desist and then I threatened to turn over to Mrs. Sterling the love letter which he had written me before I came here.

"I had that letter with me last night when we were together in this room. When he saw that I would not return it to him he grew furious and tried to take it from me. We fought over it, just as that spy there saw, and Mr. Sterling was getting the best of me when I pushed that toque over his face to quiet him."

"How came you to have the toque?" Suchet inquired.

"I brought it along from Mrs. Sterling's bedroom before she went in to retire. Then I spilled a generous dose of chloroform on it, which I found in a medicine cabinet, for I feared just such an encounter as did take place. I was desperate, but determined to use this means only as a last resort. But, before God, I didn't intend to kill him with it. I didn't! I didn't!"

She was losing control of herself once more Talbot Suchet exchanged significant glances with the family physician and the coroner, then turned his attention once more to the maid.

"What did you do when you discovered you had killed Mr. Sterling?"

"I was so overwhelmed by what I had done that I ran from the house. After a while, however, I decided that flight was foolish and so returned to the house and locked the door."

"Which way did you run when you left the house for that short space of time?" Suchet queried.

"Why, I ran out the side door and back of the house. From there I started cutting across the large open fields which lie between here and the canal. When I reached the canal and found I couldn't go any further I began thinking it over more calmly and decided to return."

"And how long were you out of the house? Can you remember?"

"About twenty minutes. I remember, because the clock struck half-past ten as I rushed away and when I returned to go up to my room it was ten minutes to eleven."

"H'm!" Suchet stared at her sharply. "While you were out of the house, then, the side door was unlocked, I take it?"

"Why, yes; I didn't stop to lock it in my fright."

"I see!" He turned abruptly from her and began questioning the other servants each in turn. Apparently satisfied with their answers, he looked over at the pompous Inspector.

"I think we may as well dismiss the servants; but—wait a minute!"

Then, unexpectedly, he turned toward the maid.

"Will you fetch me a pair of scissors, please?"

She nodded, uncomprehending, and in a few moments had produced the desired article. Then from his pocket he drew forth five small envelopes. Upon each one he wrote

a name, corresponding with the four persons of the Sterling household and one for Costigan.

"I shall now subject you to a slight humiliation," he smiled. "It will only last a moment."

As he concluded speaking he approached each one of the five persons in turn and cut off two or three hairs from their heads, depositing them in the envelopes bearing the owner's name.

"That will be all for the present. You may now go to your rooms, but I warn you that the house is guarded, so it will be useless for any of you to attempt escape, if that idea should occur to you. As for you, Mr. Costigan, you may likewise return to your house—and thank you for the information! And now, with your permission, Mrs. Sterling, I should like to make a little personal investigation of the house."

Mrs. Sterling nodded wearily and Suchet departed on his tour of inspection. Both house and grounds immediately surrounding it received his careful attention. As he reentered the library Inspector Browning came forward with an anxious expression on his face.

"What do you think of the case?" he asked in a low tone.

Talbot stared steadily at the speaker before replying:

"I'll tell you one thing! Whatever Miss Crosby may have done, I don't believe she's guilty of the murder! Somebody in that bunch was lying. You know as well as I do that the inhalation of chloroform won't kill a man unless he's in an exceedingly weakened condition, and the family physician here certifies to the fact that Sterling was in good health up to the time of this tragedy."

"Then who did it and how did they kill him?" Browning demanded.

"That is what I'm going to try and find out. What is your theory respecting this case, Doctor Landis?" Suchet turned suddenly upon the coroner.

Coroner Landis scratched his head dubiously.

"Frankly," he replied, "I have no opinion to offer as yet. This is the most baffling case I have ever had. I feel confident, however, that Mr. Sterling did not meet his death from the effects of chloroform."

Talbot Suchet nodded and, taking from his pocket a hypodermic needle and a small vial, drew a small quantity of blood from the body which he emptied into the vial.

"There's nothing further I can do now, Inspector," he remarked, "until I've tested this blood. In the meantime I suppose you will take every precaution to guard both this house and Costigan's."

"You just bet I will!"

"That will be all, then," he concluded and, gripping his hat, bowed himself out.

Suchet spent the greater part of the day in his laboratory and about six o'clock that evening, called Browning up on the phone.

"If it isn't too much trouble," he said, "I'd be glad if you'd bring all the suspects to my laboratory here at eight o'clock this evening, as you probably realize I can't drag my paraphernalia all around the suburbs. Thanks, Inspector!"

It lacked a minute of eight when Inspector Browning and two officers ushered into Suchet's apartments the same group of persons that had made up the gathering in Roger Sterling's library in the small hours of the morning, with the exception of the physician and coroner.

Talbot ushered his guests into seats provided for them in the spacious laboratory and then, standing up in front of his long table, drew their attention to himself.

"We have here a remarkable case," he began, gazing from one to the other to make sure he had their attention. "A man has been murdered—not with a bullet or knife, nor with poisoned food or drink, but by a new scientific weapon which very, very few people have ever heard about. And that weapon, let me tell you, was not chloroform! I am not forgetting Miss Crosby's confession, either. Miss Crosby did not kill Mr. Sterling!"

There was an audible gasp from the small group assembled.

"I have prepared some cultures in these test-tubes," he continued, pointing to the objects in question, "and have made a microscopic examination of the blood of Roger Sterling."

He pointed to a microscope and a number of slides near it.

"On this slide," he picked it up, "I have placed a pin-point of a culture made from the blood of Mr. Sterling. I find that under this dark-field miscroscope the constituents of his blood are plainly visible. And, ladies and gentlemen, this examination has shown me beyond a doubt that phosgene, or carbonyl chloide, was the factor responsible for his death.

He gazed slowly about the circle of faces to see what impression he had made. No one stirred, although a look of relief crept into Jennie Crosby's face, while the eccentric-looking Costigan gazed at the speaker in mild-eyed wonder.

"Phosgene," continued Suchet, "is a product of the World War and is one of the most deadly gases in existence. A small amount injected into this room would cause almost instant death and would leave no trace behind, with the exception of the chlorine to be found in the blood."

The assembled guests looked at each other aghast.

"I have here," he continued, holding up a small envelope, "a sample of the hair of a certain party in this room. On this slide"—he held up the object in question—"I have mounted a few hairs found clutched in the dead man's hands. I will now place the hairs in this envelope side by side with those on the slide and will ask you, Inspector, to look through this high-power miscroscope and tell me whether you can detect any difference between them."

Inspector Browning came forward and bent over the miscroscope, scrutinizing closely the minute objects on the slide.

"You may or may not have heard of Bertillon's great discovery," Suchet addressed the rest of the audience. "This notable Frenchman has studied out a system whereby the hair of one's head can convict one with the same unerring accuracy as finger prints. Every individual's hair has some difference from that of his neighbor, either in color or texture, or in both. To the naked eye this difference is not apparent, but when seen under the powerful lens of this microscope the difference or similarity, as the case may be, can readily be distinguished."

Browning looked up from his scrutiny.

"They look alike to me in every detail," he remarked.

"That is as it should be," Talbot replied, then drew from his desk drawer a number of other small envelopes. "Now, I want you to compare the hairs on this slide with the ones in these envelopes."

The Inspector looked again into the microscope while the rest waited tensely, they knew not for what.

"By Jove! There is a difference, ain't there," Browning exclaimed as he gazed at one after the other. "I'll say the first ones I looked at are identical with the hairs you have mounted on the slide."

"Thank you!" Suchet smiled. "I wanted the rest of my auditors to hear you say that to remove any idea of prejudice that they might attribute to me." He turned to face them fully. "Ladies and gentlemen, the hairs which compare in every respect to those on the slide belong to"—he paused dramatically while he reached for the envelope to display its name to us—"Mr. Costigan!"

Costigan jumped up from his chair and shook a bony fist at the speaker, his face red with anger.

"You can't pull such stuff off around here," he shouted. "You can't prove anything! You expect us to believe all that rot?"

Suchet remained calm under the challenge.

"Listen!" His voice had a hard ring. "What was your object in going over to the Sterling house and then returning to your own during the interval that the maid left the side door open in her thoughtless flight?"

"Who says I went over there?" Costigan rapped out.

"Your footprints have told me. I discovered them last night with the aid of my flashlight and I examined them thoroughly this morning by daylight. To be positive, I inveigled your housekeeper, while you were away to-day, to loan me the pair of shoes you had worn last night. They fitted your prints down to the smallest detail, down to the two nail heads that had worked themselves partly out of the heel of your right shoe. You evidently had waited for an opportunity of this kind, and when you saw the maid leave the door open you took advantage of the situa-

tion and did your work. What your motive was I don't know."

"I can tell you that," Mrs. Sterling put in tonelessly. "Costigan, or Enoch Levin as his name really is, was my first sweetheart. I refused him because his profligate life warranted it and then I married Roger Sterling. Enoch was away at the time Roger and I were married and when he returned and found out what occurred we had a violent quarrel and he left, saying he would disappear and never trouble me again."

"But did't you know it was that party that bought the house next-door?" questioned Talbot.

"No; he came here under the assumed name of Costigan, probably to carry out a vengeful purpose. I never saw him from the time he left me until early this morning when he invited himself and spread that horrid tale to throw suspicion off himself."

"Levin"—Suchet turned upon the murderer —"you'd better confess. There's no use denying your part of the affair any longer."

The guilty man apparently realized that there was no further need for dissemblance. He wet his lips once or twice, glared at his interrogator, and then spoke:

"I'll tell it to you, all right! Sterling was a pilferer and scoundrel! He stole the patent for an invention from my laboratory when I was gone to New Mexico and passed it off as his own handiwork. It netted him a cool half-million. I swore I would get him. I leased the house next-door under the name of Costigan and took care that none of the Sterling household ever saw me before I was ready for them.

"Last night my opportunity came when I saw the struggle between the maid and Mr. Sterling and saw her run out and leave the door open. I took a small cylinder of phosgene, which I had carefully prepared some time ago, and stole into his house. I entered the library and made my way cautiously over to his chair, where he was stretched out. But something must have disturbed him, or the fumes of the chloroform weren't as strong as the maid had thought they were, for he started up as I got near and the next moment we were locked in a struggle. Sterling was rather weak yet from the chloroform, and all he could do was to grab me by the hair and hang on while I pounded him loose. He must have had a good hold, for when I finally knocked him into the chair he had several of my hairs in his hands. The next thing I did was to press my handkerchief, which I had saturated with chloroform before I left the house to guard against just such an emergency, over his face and he was soon unconscious again. It was the work of a minute to insert the spout of the metallic cylinder up his nose and, holding my handkerchief tightly over his face so none of the gas would escape, press home the plunger. Three breaths finished him."

"You have heard the story." Suchet turned to the Inspector. "I leave the case in your hands."

NEURITIS DUE TO TOO TIGHT WRIST WATCH

BE careful not to bind the strap of your wrist watch too tight. Several cases of neutritis in the fingers and hands have been traced to this cause. Dr. John S. Stopford tells in the *Lance* of a student who experienced tingling pains along the inner borders of the hand and in the little finger. These had persisted for some time and caused discomfort and anxiety. On examination a tender point was discovered on the dorsel surface of the styloid process of the ulnar, and pressure in the situation caused pain to radiate from this point into the dorsal cutaneous branch of the ulnar nerve. There was no sign of paresis or atrophy of any of the intrinsic muscles of the hand, nor were any trophic chances found. On investigating a cause for this localized neuritis the only possibility appeared to be the wearing of a tight wristlet watch, which clearly could produce compression of the dorsal cutaneous branch of the ulnar nerve as it curved round the lower extremities of the ulnar. On discarding the wristlet the discomfort gradually disappeared.

The Mysterious Third Dimension

By RALPH NIX

DOCTOR SHARP had just completed indexing the records of the Hampton Roads Murder Mystery when there resounded on the door of our office an impatient knocking. Setting a new record on the concealed dictaphone so that all conversation could be invisibly recorded I quickly admitted our visitor.

A tall, angular individual with a most striking face, serrated by long parallel wrinkles on the forehead, stood in the doorway a second. Furiously he puffed at a big black cigar as he glanced about the room and stepped in quietly. He was plainly but neatly dressed and possessed the air of a man who made his way in this world by driving to the point at once and rendering quick decisions.

"Doctor Sharp?" The man utterly ignored my presence and advanced towards the doctor, who bowed his massive head in acknowledgment.

"I come on a very secret mission," he continued hurriedly. "Money no object. You and your assistant must accompany me to New York at once!"

"Have a chair." Doctor Sharp swung out a big foot and spun a chair to the center of the floor.

"Never! We must depart at once. My life and that of my family depend upon it. In spite of all the efforts of the New York police force and several private detectives my whole family is doomed to extinction within the next thirty-six hours unless you can checkmate my enemies. I'd given up all hope till my daughter read in the papers of your wizard achievements like a persistent Nemesis—the Norfolk robbery disclosure and the cases at Newport News and Hampton Roads. So I've come to bring you back with me without delay."

"My dear man," returned the doctor calmly, eyeing our visitor with a searching, penetrating gaze and raising on one elbow on the couch on which he had been reclining, "you can't expect us to dash off on your case without taking us into your confidence."

"Time for all that on the trip to New York. Come! I implore you. Otherwise I'll have to speed back alone and take my chances——"

"Sorry to detain you!" Doctor Sharp jumped up as he gave me the regular although much unexpected cue to close the door. Immediately I pressed the button at my side which served to lock the door electrically.

But our prospective client cleared the floor in one bound and to my infinite disgust darted out the doorway while I stood there frantically pressing a connection which would not work.

Fortunately my superior viewed my embarrassment with his usual indulgence.

"I hope you'll get your scientific contraptions perfected in due time, Hal," he smiled. "I should have liked to detain our visitor because he actually had me puzzled. His disguise was almost impenetrable."

Not a little did this statement perplex me as frankly I had observed no disguise at all in our visitor, but I was more interested just then in determining the cause of the malfunctioning of the door. I traced the wiring and soon observed that the break in the electric circuit had occurred on the chair which Doctor Sharp had previously swung to the center of the room; the same connection ran to the dictaphone also. My ingenious scientific planning had amounted to naught! Nevertheless, with my usual perseverance I resolved to provide a fixture that would withstand any reasonable shock.

"Just wait till I fix it, now, and there will be no more trouble," I declared stoutly. "Whether that man was disguised or not, Doc, you see how it pays to advertise. If I hadn't

written up our exploits for the New York papers no one would have ever known of the firm 'Sharp & Dillard.' At least it would have taken a long time before the American public became acquainted with our acute, incisive reasoning, subtle methods and swift results. Just wait till I get my scientific inventions perfected and a criminal won't dare talk or think or let his heart beat without identification as precise and infallible as finger-prints and Bertillon measurements."

"Come out of the clouds, young man!" the doctor cut in curtly. "A thorough knowledge of human nature is more valuable in this game than all the tricks of science. We've just let a slippery man get out of our hands. Make up in your disguise as a college professor. Don't overdo it! Then get on the trail of our visitor. He's hanging around in Hampton most likely. The first rule in our partnership is to prevent crime, so make haste!"

"But suppose he's changed his disguise, Doc!"

"He can't change that limp in his left leg nor the scar on the right thumb. Watch the stoop in his shoulders also. If you meet him face to face, observe his right eye in particular; the iris has a V-shaped discoloration and there's a fixed stare to that eye; and the flesh is creased into a semicircle above the cheek, corresponding to the holder for a magnifying-glass. That man was a watch-maker in his day. The wrinkles in his forehead are artificial but very deceiving. Observe him enter a room instinctively avoiding a board on the floor that creaks, opening a door without perceptible noise and looking about the place with quick comprehensive glances—such are the indelible marks of all mature criminals. Be careful, Hal, because that man possesses the faculty of intuition along with the best of detectives."

I had completed my disguise, not the dime-novel, false-whiskered kind, but polished and artistic so as not to attract second notice, and was about to start on my mission when again there came a nervous pounding upon the door, more tempetuous than ever before, and I waited.

Doctor Sharp winked and rose. "More developments, Hal. You won't have to shadow our friend now," he said as he opened the door himself.

Confronting him was a most remarkable man. Never were two men so closely alike in giant build and strong acquiline features. Amazed beyond expression, I could not believe that our previous visitor had transformed simself so quickly and effectively into the double of Doctor Sharp! Instinctively I looked for evidence of a limp, the scar on the right thumb, and the unnatural right eye. Beyond all doubt this was not the same man. The shoulders were broader, the chest deeper—in all a most powerful physique. Thin waving black hair, tinged with gray at the temples, crowned a broad forehead. The eyes were deep and dark and set far apart, the nose big, the mouth a mere slit, its smallness accentuated by the huge dimensions of the lantern jaw.

"What can I do for you, Chief?" Doctor Sharp extended his hand in cordial greeting and introduced the caller, Chris Worthington, Chief of Police. With all deference to the police department our investigations had generally been conducted independently and more expeditiously. Consequently this was my first meeting of this worthy personage.

The Chief was palpably excited. Drawing from his coat a telegram he requested that we keep the subject of his visit in strictest confidence.

"The remarkable fact," Chris Worthington continued, "is that I am offered five thousand dollars to report to the Hotel Astor, New York, by midnight at the latest to protect the life of a millionaire and his family, but no details are given. On top of that my adopted daughter Gladys—that is my niece whom I've adopted since the death of her father— has disappeared. She never leaves home without telling me and has never been absent for lunch. But she had gone early this morning when I received this telegram. I waited till lunch time for her to show up. Somehow, the more I think about these two queer incidences the more nervous I become. If any harm should come to my Gladys!——"

"I understand perfectly," observed Doctor Sharp, "how you feel about it. You suspect, and wisely, that the telegram was simply an obvious effort to get you safely out of town while the sender could plot revenge at your

most vulnerable spot, your adopted daughter. In fact, Chief, your own life may also be in immediate danger. Take off that uniform and exchange clothes with me. No quibbling if we are to take charge of your case!"

"It's not my life that I care a rap about," declared the chief as he removed his uniform. "Like a doctor, however, I don't want to handle a serious case in my own family. I'm too anxious and concerned about it. Not that I don't hold my own police force in the highest regard, but rather that I want to keep this investigation secret. And, frankly, I'm broken—afraid. My poor Gladys!" The chief turned his head away, overcome with emotion.

"So she left without a word?"

"Yes. Never a word."

"Very singular," murmured Doctor Sharp as he added a few finishing touches to his disguise. "For the life of me I can't understand how any one could get such complete control over your daughter and cause her to desert you apparently of her own account, not without your finding out something about it before this."

"Bosh! Your deductions are too speedy! I tell you, Doctor," the chief boomed, his deep-set moist eyes sparking with anger, "that girl has kept company with not a single man. I've guarded her scrupulously, escorted her on all occasions at night and don't permit any of these young jazz fiends hanging around. No sir! No girl friends either—that is, none that I know anything about."

"Ah! Now we're getting down to business. There's a fact of importance. Let's be off. We'll take the shortest cut to your house by way of the fort and search your daughter's rooms as soon as possible."

We broke all speed records as we passed through Hampton and Phoebus and so over the bridge to the spacious concrete drive at Mill Creek at the entrance to Fort Monroe, past the guardhouse and along the imposing line of two-storied brick quarters, the magnificent hospital, administration building and the library. Then we swung to the left down the deserted military road toward the balloon shed at the far end of the reservation.

We were not halted, although there were a few soldiers near the surf apparently experimenting with hand grenades.

The doctor and chief were uncommunicative on the ride so that I had a breathing spell for contemplating and retrospection. One quality there is which Doctor Sharp lacks, at least to my way of thinking—that is, the higher markings and deeper profundity of a master detective. All this sleuthhound craves is the facts, not theories and appearances. Just let him devour all the facts, and, so to speak, he doesn't give them time to be digested but thunders straight away on the trail. No improvisations, no classical music for inspiration, no puffing pensively at a cigar, no dark room meditations and seances—none of these for Doctor Sharp. In other words, I've often feared that his thunderbolt methods, both mental and physical, would eventually end in disaster. On the other hand, a studious life spent in contemplation is surely developing in me the vision of a seer. By rare good fortune my father was a close friend of Doctor Sharp, as a result of which our partnership has been formed, and ever since I have managed to exercise a thoughtful checking hand.

As we passed the lighthouse and approached the batteries I was particularly struck by the utilization of natural camouflage to conceal the low-lying sites of mortar and gun emplacements: a long line of fragrant pine trees reaching to the skies with trunks so close together that their lofty branches intertwined into a dense impenetrable growth effectively obscuring the armament from airplane observation—in fact, eclipsing the blue sky as completely as an opaque black cloud.

Arriving at the balloon shed, the end of the main road, we deserted our car. Less than fifteen minutes of brisk walking brought us opposite Chief Worthington's massive colonial residence, an isolated square mansion on the outskirts of Buckroe Beach.

Doctor Sharp was in the lead. He shot a quick comprehensive glance through the wide hallway and was soon mounting the stairs two at a time. We followed more leisurely and to my surprise the doctor emerged from a room near the head of the stairs and handed a sealed envelope to the chief.

"Here's something you evidently overlooked, addressed to you. I found it on your daughter's dressing-table."

"Overlooked the deuce! Why, I haven't been in Gladys's room in months! Well, I'll be hanged! This isn't so bad after all, only a trip to Norfolk for the day to meet a friend. But how do you account for that telegram to me?"

"There's a fallacy in your deduction, Chief. Who is the friend in Norfolk? Answer that, and we'll be far on the way to a solution of our problem. Hello! Here's something of importance!"

We were in a spacious bedroom, attractively decorated with blue wall paper, an elaborate Oriental rug and plush curtains. The old mahogany furniture, long mirrors and large family portraits were arranged with great taste and pleasing effect.

From the bottom of a bureau drawer, underneath a pile of handkerchiefs, Doctor Sharp drew forth a small package of letters. Using his magnifying lens he inspected each one critically, passing each in turn over to Chief Worthington.

"We're getting deeper into this matter, Chief. Here are three letters to your daughter, saved evidently from those she valued most during the past year. As I suspected, your obstinacy in depriving her of the company of the younger set has resulted in a most natural outlet—a love affair through the mails. Have you ever heard of this gentleman who signs himself Captain Blumell?"

"No I haven't, but for heaven's sake don't be sarcastic. I see my mistake; how selfish I've been——"

"When did her father, your brother, die?"

"One year ago this month."

"Have you preserved any of the letters of condolence?"

"Gladys handled all that, the letters and so forth. I believe she did preserve some of them."

Again Doctor Sharp rummaged amid the contents of the drawers, lockers, trunks, until he seized upon a small tin chest and pried it open.

Chief Worthington and I were inspecting the letters already discovered. There was nothing unusual about the context, the usual type of love epistle. It was evident that the love affair had progressed steadily, and each subsequent letter suggested that Gladys had gradually encouraged the writer. One fact alone was especially noticeable, the contrast between the poor quality of the paper and the beautiful penmanship and perfect English.

I then turned my attention to a picture of Gladys on the oak mantelpiece which the chief had previously called to our attention. She was a comely girl of perhaps eighteen and even the photograph reflected charm and vivaciousness.

"I have it!" The exclamation of the doctor caused the chief and myself to start and face about suddenly.

The doctor had finally found a letter of condolence from Captain Blumell, an excellent specimen, and a reply at still greater length dated one month later in which Blumell professed among other things that he had known the father of Gladys very well and hoped some day of having the pleasure of meeting her.

"At the time of writing these letters," Doctor Sharp announced, "this self-styled Captain Blumell was a prisoner in the federal penitentiary at Sing Sing!"

"Impossible! Heavens, no!" Chris Worthington sank his face in his big hands and settled into an armchair.

"Follow my deductions, Chief, and we'll try to establish the identity of this criminal without dispute." The countenance of the doctor was inscrutable save for the harsh snapping of his lantern jaw and the flashing of his black eyes as he paused in his remarks. "My suspicions were immediately aroused by the poor quality of writing paper. The writer would never have used it unless he was forced to. Other earmarks of his character are the neatness, the style, the chirography—a neat, educated, impulsive individual who is left-handed. On one of the letters my magnifying-glass reveals an otherwise confused and practically invisible impression of a tobacco stain from the right thumb; an old circular scar can also be seen on the thumb print, evidently caused by the removal of a wart. The letter of condolence is the only one addressed and the envelope—the only one available—is postmarked Ossining."

To clinch the argument Doctor Sharp removed the stamp from the envelope. "Concealed under this stamp," he concluded, "is the printed number, 14202, the identification

number of a general prisoner at Sing Sing penitentiary, Ossining, New York!"

Chief Worthington collapsed in the chair; his face went white; his body shook all over as with a most violent fit of the ague.

"Brace up, Chief! There is still time to save your daughter, now that we know positively with whom we are dealing—Slippery Jim, alias Captain Blumell! He escaped from my office less than an hour ago and has not yet had time to get in touch with Gladys. Telephone Norfolk headquarters and have them locate your daughter and conduct her back to Fort Monroe!"

The chief, although shaken to the core in contemplating the heinous crime under way, collected himself quickly. While he was giving the order from the next room over the phone, I asked the doctor for more details about his deductions which had apparently been corroborated in full by Worthington.

"This business still appears vague and mysterious to me, Doc," I admitted.

"Where a crime or plot is called vague and mysterious, Hal, there is always a nigger in the woodpile somewhere. No matter how shrewd and cunning the criminal, I have yet to see a thorough and proper investigation into any case without finding some trace or clue by means of which the perpetrator can be positively identified. In this instance I have known Slippery Jim's record from the time he first went wrong in the Philippine Islands in '98. He disappeared among pagan tribes for years in Mindanao. There were rumors of his living in the heart of the jungles among tribes who built their homes in treetops, and rumors of his death when he had actually reappeared in the United States as a watchmaker. Later he soldiered under an assumed name at Fort Monroe as a company clerk. Then he left the army and took to the road as a wonderful hypnotist, giving lectures and exhibitions throughout the country. He was a hard man to trail and was a wizard at disguise. After a bank robbery he again disappeared but was finally apprehended by Chief Worthington and sentenced for ten years in Sing Sing. His sentence has just about expired."

Doctor Sharp paused and went over to a tall French window which looked out upon a sombre knot of pine trees.

"Slippery Jim's methods are certainly unique. By the method of analogy I reasoned out the use to which Slippery Jim had put the write-up in the papers about the death of Gladys's father. Certain commercial establishments dealing in powders for children, wedding presents and the like keep posted through the daily press on births and marriages. I've a record of one Bible concern, which I recently put out of commission, that kept track of deaths and forwarded a Bible along with a bill and a polite form letter to the deceased. Usually these Bibles were purchased without question by the relatives who were glad to learn their kin had apparently turned his thoughts heavenward before his departure. But for a convict to use a death notice and the obituary for the purpose of gaining a young girl's affections so that he could wreck vengence on the family—well, that's Slippery Jim!"

Doctor Sharp stopped short. He leaped back from the window. There followed the report of a firearm as the window-pane crashed to the floor. Ducking, Sharp returned the fire and bounded out of the room and down the stairway. The chief, who had been attracted by the volleys, and I were close at his heels. We conducted a running fight for three hundred yards along the water front when a deliberately and well-aimed shot from the doctor brought silence. We raced up and found my superior bending over a frail young man who had been shot through the leg.

"Chief Worthington," panted the boy, "I was ordered to shoot you in case I found you at your home after four o'clock. But if you promise to let me off easy I'll turn state evidence."

Doctor Sharp, who had been mistaken by the boy for the Chief of Police, replied: "You'll get fair treatment if you tell me all."

'Slippery Jim sent me here, sir. He has already met Gladys, your daughter, and they have eloped to Washington, D. C. He ordered me to shoot to wound you only, not to kill. That's why I missed completely, I guess. He planned to have me take charge of your house and hold you till after he had abducted—eloped with Gladys. He said your servants

were away and that he was coming back to pay you a visit. But I didn't know these gentlemen were in your home. Quick, sir! If you intend to save Gladys, catch the first train to Washington. Jim has already an hour's start on you!"

With this confession the lack-lustre eyes of the lad closed; he had swooned. Doctor Sharp examined the wound and then forced the eyelids open inspecting the pupils critically.

"False alarm, Chief! This girl is hypnotized!"

"But how in the world?"

"Tush! Tush! No time to explain. It's a girl all right!" Doctor Sharp, himself a great hypnotist, fixed his eagle-gaze steadily between the closed eyes of the wounded person. He made a few mesmeric passes and paused. Then he gripped the head of the girl between his big hands.

"Wake up!" he called loudly.

"That's it. No go back to sleep again!" The eyes had opened with a start and then turned glazed.

"Who are you?"

"The wife of Slippery Jim!"

"Why were you sent here?"

"My husband wrote me to come here and waylay Chief Worthington at once and hold him prisoner, provided the Chief had not already gone to New York. If everything panned out as arranged, Jim was going to meet Gladys in Norfolk, but if there were detectives with the chief, I was to pretend that Jim had already gone to Washington so that they would all follow and leave the way clear for Jim and Gladys to come home at five o'clock this afternoon."

"Did your husband hypnotize you since he left Sing Sing?"

"No, I have not seen him since he got out. But he has always had the power to hypnotize me through the mails or over the telephone.

It was pitiful indeed to see the wretch after Doctor Sharp brought her out of the spell. She was entirely unaware of what had happened and extremely repentant for her criminal although unconscious actions.

Acting under Sharp's orders, I conducted the woman back to Worthington's home and after making her as comfortable as possible, for the wound was painful but not serious, I answered the incessant ringing of the telephone.

The message from the Norfolk Headquarters was to the effect that Gladys Worthington had been seen to take the Old Point Special and should arrive at Willoughby Spit within the next half-hour. Banging up the receiver, I raced toward the fort with the news.

It was now nearly five o'clock and only by running a good part of the way could I expect to reach the landing on time. When I reached the balloon shed I could see the others running at top speed down the straight concrete driveway a quarter of a mile ahead. Doctor Sharp was in the lead.

A military patrol halted me at the small arms target range long enough for identification, as Doctor Sharp had already gotten the assistance of the soldiers in throwing a tight cordon about the small peninsular on which the fort is located, so that it was physically impossible for any one to leave the reservation without a pass. My superior had acted with such legerdermain swiftness and remarkable foresight that I confidently believed our problem now solved.

Rounding the curve of a deserted stretch of the road I caught up with the puffing and exhausted Chief of Police, imparting to him with panting breath the information I had received over the phone.

"It's only seven minutes by ferry from Willoughby Spit to the fort. I'm afraid we won't get there in time, Hal. I hope the doctor makes the landing, though, as Slippery Jim will surely be there and we can bank on his pulling off something unusual. But he's trapped with no chance of escape from the fort. Actually I feel relieved. He may try one last trick to make away with Gladys, for all the good it will do him. But he's not a murderer —too afraid of the gallows. No matter how desperate——"

"Wouldn't it be a happy surprise," I interposed, "if Slippery Jim has finally given it up as hopeless? He knows he can't fool Gladys for long; we're hot on his trail and it seems the only sensible thing to abandon his desire for revenge."

"He's planned this revenge too long, Hal. Ten years in the pen he's plotted and schemed

a thousand times and counter-times; he won't give up till the last ditch—too much Italian blood in his veins. Anyone but Slippery Jim would be satisfied with abducting Gladys, but he must bring her—poor innocent thing—to her very home and show me the horrible tragedy with my own eyes. With his devilish scheming he believes that the last place on earth we would search for her would be in her own home. What's that?"

The chief pointed to the prostrate form of a man ahead. I sprinted forward and found Doctor Sharp lying face downward in a semi-conscious condition along the side of the roadway. No evidence was there of a bruise or wound on his person, but a sweet sickening odor filled the air.

Recognizing me the doctor mumbled: "Asphyxiating gas grenade—Slippery Jim and Gladys in our Ford car.. Tried to go out main Mill Creek exit but turned back by guard even though he's in officer's uniform. Then he spun around and entered old fort over moat." The doctor pointed to a nearby bridge.

"Hurry!" he cried and then became unconscious.

In spite of the fact that the whole area occupied by the military reservation at Fort Monroe is less than two miles long by one-quarter to one-half of a mile in width, and is entirely surrounded by water except for the narrow neck joining the mainland at Buckroe Beach; in spite of the fact that a cordon of selected soldiers enclosed the reservation; in spite of an immediate and detailed search over every foot of the ground, through the casemates, old walls, quarters, barracks and all official buildings; a search rigorously conducted by secret service detectives, the most competent of the police force, and heroes of the World War—in spite of all this, nothing was discovered of Slippery Jim and Gladys save the deserted Ford car in the middle of the parade ground inside the old fort.

A more mysterious and uncanny disappearance would have been difficult to imagine.

Late that night Chief Worthington and I called upon Doctor Sharp, whom I had carried to the post hospital, to make our report on the futile search. We found him sitting up in bed and protesting violently at being detained from conducting the investigation personally.

"Slippery Jim put one over on me!" declared the doctor, "but let me out and I'll guarantee to round him up before morning."

"Impossible!" asseverated Chief Worthington. "We've been working all evening and the best part of the night. I'm of the positive opinion that they are no longer on the post. However, we found out where he got his uniform and the hand grenade. A regular army officer who had been experimenting up the beach reported back in a dazed condition, with all his equipment gone except his underwear. Also a fishing pole, a few loaves of bread, a couple of flat-irons and a coil of Manila rope are missing from the Post Exchange, but that theft occurred earlier in the day, and likely as not has nothing to do with our present investigation."

At midnight a great commotion occurred among the military guard. It appears that a sentinel had seen the nude form of a man rise from the centre of the moat. This moat is a body of yellow water ten feet deep in the centre and some eighty or one hundred feet wide, which encircles the eighteen-foot wall of the casemates like a giant aqueous ring for a distance of one mile around the old fort. The sentinel was so stupefied that he did not give the alarm until the apparition rose from the water, climbed out, deposited a sheet of paper on the bridge, and again descended into the heart of the muddy water. As soon as the phantom had disappeared the guard fired his gun, attracting patrols from all over the reservation, who scoured the edge of the moat for the reappearance of this strange creature.

The report of the sentinel would have been discredited in its entirety had I not obtained the sheet of paper in question and noticed scribbled thereon:

"My Dear Friend Worthington: Call off your hounds and guarantee me against prosecution, and I will deliver your daughter to you absolutely unharmed. I expect an answer before sun-up in this very place. If any of your patrols are around this spot I won't appear, and you will never see your niece alive again. Slippery Jim."

As incredible as was this incident the chief and I immediately reported to Doctor Sharp for instructions.

"Ha! He's weakening!" Doctor Sharp rubbed his hands together and set his lantern jaw with a snap. "Although the story sounds fictitious, this warning of his at least is real. Hal, I want you to make sure that this man is hiding in the moat. Set up your night camera in a concealed position and make connections on your reply so that when Slippery Jim picks up the paper to read it you will get his photograph. Get it operating right! Cover a wide field so as to obtain several continuous exposures to make sure that he disappears into the water. The camera won't lie! Cover all approaches to the moat with a reliable guard, but don't post any men near the camera, otherwise our friend won't show up. Tell Jim to go to—— Well, make your reply anything you like."

"But," protested Worthington, "we're taking too big chances. My daughter's life is at stake!"

"Not at all. Just keep the camera well concealed and run an extra connection from the paper to a position far in the rear so you'll know when Slippery Jim examines your reply. Then fetch me the photos at once and I'll land this criminal and find your daughter before sun-up."

By means of an ingenious invention which I had perfected, a silent motion picture camera to take photographs in the dark, most reliable results were to be expected. Only after a number of years of experiment had I obtained the proper plates which were especially sensitized to the red end of the spectrum.

Although Doctor Sharp had seen my invention work, he had never required it on a case before. Proud and exultant, therefore, I brought to my superior a complete photographic record of Slippery Jim's actions. The series of exposures showed Slippery Jim distinctly picking up our reply, reading it, tearing it up, and then climbing down the bridge and disappearing into the centre of the opaque waters. As thrilled as I was with the success of my scientific work, I was none the less awed and mystified by the problem of a man who disappeared and remained for hours under water.

Doctor Sharp was dressed and ready when we arrived. After examining the pictures with his usual care, his one comment was: "Good work, Hal!" No doubt he had come to a conclusion as logical as a mathematical deduction and as swift as the flight of thought. He led us directly to the bridge and over the moat where our reply had been placed. With the help of the military patrols a skiff was equipped with oars. The doctor took the oars and slowly rowed down along the wall for a hundred yards before he stopped and examined a growth of reed grass in mid-stream. Again he rowed ahead.

Never shall I forget those dreadful, dragging moments. A heavy fog was drizzling down. The great library clock boomed away: Three! Four! Five! Were we searching for the ghost of a drowned man? Is it possible even for a camera to be tricked into recording the image of a phantom? While these thoughts were flashing through my brain Doctor Sharp was stroking his chin in obvious perplexity. We had circled halfway around the wall, a flashlight being our only means of inspecting minutely the surface of the water when a dull splash was barely audible not far ahead—just such a splash as is made by a turtle slipping off a log.

The doctor's face lit up. The little rings of water had almost flattened out as we drew to the centre of the disturbance. Nothing was visible save the hollow end of an old fishing rod projecting a few inches above the surface. Stopping the skiff, the doctor placed his thumb over the hollow end.

Although this weird performance seemed to last for hours, I feel confident that in less than three minutes there popped above the water the head and shoulders of Slippery Jim.

"Game's up!" shouted Doctor Sharp as he grabbed the fugitive by the nape of the neck and hauled him bodily into the boat. Not very gently either did the doctor squeeze the criminal with his iron vise. After a few stifled yells all the fight was out of Slippery Jim.

Doctor Sharp then withdrew the fishing pole from the water. On the far end was a rubber mouthpiece.

"Some natives in the Philippines can stay under water an hour at a time using this diving apparatus," he smiled. "They simply get

the habit of breathing through the mouth, and Slippery Jim lived among them long enough to become rather expert himself. By the way, Hal, the projecting end of the fishing pole and those flat-irons on Jim's belt registered very clearly in your photographs!"

We turned over Slippery Jim to Worthington's force after futile efforts to get him to confess or to tell the whereabouts of Gladys. Slippery Jim shrank from us like a beaten cur dog. He was morose and taciturn.

The doctor spent the next two hours in inspecting with his flashlight the soft mud, sand and grass on the embankment of the moat. So many sentinels, policemen and patrols had passed over the same ground that I was forced to remark:

"No chance in the world to identify any footprints here, Doc!"

"Here we are," came his reply. "Our case is simple, as only one trail shows *bare feet*. Follow me!"

He led us at a run along the embankment, over the railroad trestle as far as the Ordnance machine shop, then down the beach into the centre of a thick growth of pine trees. He hesitated a moment, ran about in a circle, removed his coat and shoes, and started climbing one of the tallest pine trees like a monkey on all fours.

The chief and I stared at each other in utter amazement. Poor Doc! Evidently we had removed him from the hospital too soon. The strain had been too much for him. He disappeared in the thick foliage and dense mass of intertwining vines above like a monster gorilla, even before we could make any effort to stop him.

The fog had lifted and the first rays of the morning sun pierced the cool air in long, fan-shaped shafts of red over the Chesapeake Bay. Despite the morning light the doctor was completely concealed. I was afraid to shout or to attempt to climb the tree.

Imagine our surprise when a few seconds later we received the call: "Here she comes!"

Doctor Sharp lowered away gently, and the unconscious, bound and gagged form of Gladys Worthington descended at the end of a Manila rope. Chief Worthington worked with the fury of a man gone wild to release his daughter and to bring her back to consciousness. Slowly she came out of her stupor and opened a pair of wonderfully blue eyes. Embracing her adopted father, she sobbed: "Daddy! Forgive me, daddy!"

But a few days passed before Gladys was her vivacious self again. By the end of the week Slippery Jim's wife had also recovered fully, and our friend Slippery Jim had been confined indefinitely to the Tombs.

Had it not been for my perfected invention of my night operating camera I maintain that the problem of finding Slippery Jim might ever have remained unsolved. Nevertheless the failure of hundreds of searchers, including myself, to locate Gladys Worthington was beyond even my comprehension. Therefore, the explanation of Doctor Sharp on this mooted point is pertinent:

"The human race generally has not graduated beyond two dimensions. True, our pilots have explored the sea and the air to a very slight depth with submarines and airships. But to all practical purposes the third dimension is uncharted; ordinarily we think in only two dimensions. Conscious of these facts and knowing Slippery Jim's unique methods well, many of which were obtained from pagan mountain tribes in the Philippines, I naturally assumed that if he were to hide he would not seek the ordinary places in buildings, casemates and the like, but would conceal himself in the tops of trees or under water. After he had thus concealed himself in the third dimension his disappearance would appear to be a mystery to the ordinary individual conducting a search for him in two dimensions. As an example, to the ant crawling toward a fly on a piece of paper in its two dimensional universe, the flight of the fly and its disappearance in the third dimension presents an unsolved problem. Moreover, to illustrate the fact that humans ordinarily think in only two dimensions, ask any one to make four triangles from six matches without breaking the matches. Most likely he'll try to solve this problem on a plane surface instead of erecting a pyramid."

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
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84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "A Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Marc Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
89. "A Challenge to Power," by Dr. Harry Enton.
90 "The House Next-Door," by Police Captain Howard.
91 "The Trance Detective," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stagg.
93 "By the Left Hand," by Hamilton Craigie.
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95 "The Trick of the Great Yen How," by William Hamilton Osborne.
96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Last Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "A Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
105 "A Man from Siam," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
106 "The Clue of the Emerald Ring," by Bulah Poynter.
107 "Hell's Hinges," by Hamilton Craigie.
108 "The Wolf," by Katherine Stagg.
109 "The Brass Button," by Jack Bechdolt.
110 "A Whispering Mummy," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
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112 "The Missing Evidence," by Harold F. Podhaski.
113 "A Clue by Radio," by Capt. Jack Static.
114 "The District Attorney's Secret," by Chas. F. Oursler.
115 "A Man From Headquarters," by Hamilton Craigie.
116 "The Girl in the Case," by Carl Glick.
117 "A Scientific Detective," by Donald George McDonald.

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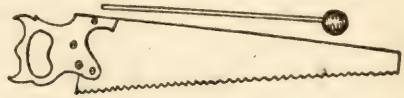

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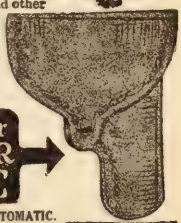

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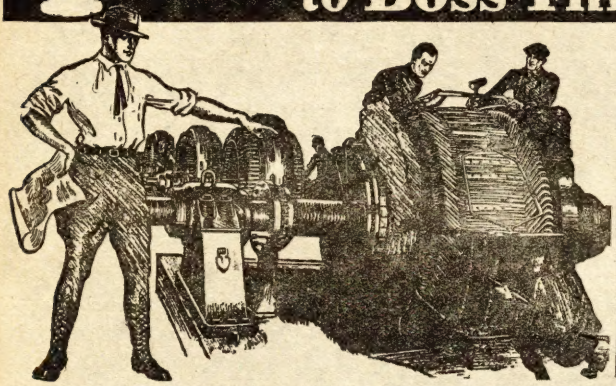

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